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NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

The League's Business

Important Notice on League's Convention

Because this year's convention city, Indianapolis, is easily accessible by motor from many mid-western points, the League has decided to open its forty-fifth National Conference on Government at 2 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, November 15th, and close it with luncheon on Friday, November 17th. The Hotel Severin has been selected as convention headquarters. As Indianapolis will be crowded that week, reservations should be made as early as possible, either through this office or directly to the hotel.

Nominating Committee Appointed

Dr. C. A. Dykstra, the League's president, has appointed the following members to the committee on nomination of League officers for 1940: William C. Beyer, Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research, *chairman*; Carl H. Chatters, Municipal Finance Officers' Association; S. V. Norton, Oakland Citizens League; John F. Sly, Princeton Local Government Survey; and Morton L. Wallerstein, League of Virginia Municipalities.

New Committee on Model State Constitution

President Dykstra has also announced a new committee to revise the League's *Model State Constitution*. Among those invited to serve are: W. Brooke Graves, Temple University, *chairman*; Frank Bane, Director of the Council of State Governments; Dr. Charles A. Beard, New Milford, Connecticut; George C. S. Benson, University of Michigan; A. E. Buck, Institute of Public Administration; J. Alton Burdine, University of Texas; Finla G. Crawford, Syracuse University; Walter F. Dodd, Chicago; John A. Fairlie, University of Illinois; Oliver P. Field, University of Indiana; Hubert R. Gallagher, Council of State Governments; Arthur N. Holcombe, Harvard University; Rodney L. Mott, Colgate University; Robert S. Rankin, Duke University; Lindsay Rogers, Columbia University; and Frank M. Stewart, University of California at Los Angeles.

League Personalities

Carl H. Pforzheimer, treasurer of the League, has recently been appointed as chairman of the Westchester County, New York, Planning Board.

John N. Edy, honorary vice president of the League, has resigned the city managership of Toledo, Ohio, to become administrative assistant to John Carmody, Federal Works Administrator. We regret that this action removes from the field of local government one of the best administrators the city manager plan has produced, but are aware that Toledo's loss is the federal government's gain and wish Mr. Edy every success in his new venture.

HOWARD P. JONES, *Secretary*

45th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GOVERNMENT ● INDIANAPOLIS
SEVERIN HOTEL—NOVEMBER 15, 16 AND 17

National Municipal Review

Editorial Comment

The War and Our Cities

THE impact of war on the conduct and maintenance of municipal services will be given some attention at the National Municipal League's forty-fifth annual National Conference on Government at Indianapolis, November 15, 16, and 17.¹ For, even though our cities are fortunate enough to escape the necessity of providing air raid shelters, drilling their populations to withstand a rain of bombs, evacuating children and invalids, doing without lights at night, and so on, the effect of current events in Europe was felt immediately and will continue to be felt by cities in the United States.

The Mayor of New York City, for example, promptly clamped a \$20,000,000 limit on the city's 1940 capital outlay budget, in the face of requests for a total of more than \$200,000,000. Calling attention to increasing interest rates and commodity prices, he warned the City Planning Commission to hold in abeyance all but indispensable projects.

This was the most obvious and first effect of the war: money, which has been looking for safe investments for some years (to the great benefit in low interest rates of city and other governmental borrowers), is finding

more fruitful fields during war-time expansion.

But there will be other "local" problems. A profiteering scare made an impromptu appearance, and some cities moved to intercept it. Medical authorities are warning of the possibility of influenza epidemics—an indication of just one of the emergency health problems. While increased industrial activity may lighten the relief load, it may be accompanied by housing shortages in population centers and very likely by plans for intelligent rent control.² Lip service is being paid to the idea of soft-pedaling politics for the sake of presenting a united front, and it might be well at the same time to consider whether and how this trend will affect personal liberties which are so prone to roll over and play dead the minute war starts, even though the people of this country are involved only by their various sympathies. A broader and less tangible problem than any of these is the continuance of interest and progress in the improvement of local government. In recent years, despite the generally unsettled condition of world affairs, this progress has been dramatic and resultful, and it will be remembered that it was during the war period, 1914 to 1918, that the council-manager plan experienced its period of most rapid

¹Other subjects: citizen action in a democracy, role of the university in state and local government, citizen groups and local parties, state planning, metropolitan government, election methods, problems of public welfare, new trends in expenditure control, city management.

²*Rent Control in War and Peace*, a new book (paper cover) to be published soon, National Municipal League, fifty cents.

growth and won widespread recognition as the most effective form of government for American cities.

It will not benefit us as a nation to permit retrogression at the local level. If local affairs, as links in the larger chain, were important in the past, how much more vital they are

now. If good methods in management, honesty in high places, and genuine citizen control were desirable during normal times, they are more desirable today and will become indispensable if the limited emergency proclaimed by the president becomes unlimited.

Tools for the Legislative Council

SELDOM have state legislatures faced as many troublesome, controversial, new problems as in recent years; yet some of them have been doing a more orderly and business-like job than ever before.

This is especially true in those few states where there are legislative councils or their equivalents. Naturally enough, councils appear to have functioned most effectively when they have been given adequate tools, but the definite injury already done to the basic theory by the withholding of such tools is a clear danger signal.

The first *Model State Constitution*, prepared by the National Municipal League's Committee on State Government in 1921 after several years of deliberation, provided for the legislative council "to collect information . . ., (consider) proposed legislation . . ., and (report) to the legislature with its recommendations thereon, . . . prepare . . . legislation . . . in the form of bills."

While it has long been a practice for various administrative agencies, legislative reference libraries, bureaus of governmental research, interim commissions and committees, universities and others to investigate special problems and to report to or attempt to influence legislatures, sometimes with definite proposals for legislation, it seems now to have been

adequately demonstrated that this type of work is done best wholly within the legislature's control.

Wisconsin, in 1931, was the first state to attempt to establish a council, but what it created turned out to be an infrequently functioning advisory arm of the Governor rather than the legislature. Kansas and Michigan established legislative councils in 1933 (the latter abolished in 1939) and the Colorado legislature in the same year incorporated some of the features of such a council in its committee on interim committees. Since then Virginia, New Mexico, Kentucky, Nebraska, Illinois, Connecticut, Maryland, and Missouri have put this idea into effect.

It seems safe now to draw a number of general conclusions from practical experience, even though that experience has extended over less than a decade: the council is a major step forward in the legislative process; it tends to improve the quality of legislation and consequently to increase public confidence in the legislature; it permits the legislature to concentrate its attention on broad principles; it conserves time and expense; it tends to prevent costly and dangerous mistakes; it helps to thwart ignorance and special privilege; the expenditure of an adequate

(Continued on Page 693)

Replanning for Depopulation

By R. BURR SMITH, *University of Newark*

Brief outline of major problems facing municipalities today as a result of recent population trends; careful planning based on accurate knowledge necessary to efficient and economic administration.

THE modern municipal corporation is engaged constantly in the provision of services to the residents of its community. In order that these services may be rendered adequately at a rate consistent with the taxpaying capacity of the area, careful and accurate planning based upon the changing needs and income of the municipality is necessary. Among the most important trends now influencing problems of service and finance in the American city are those in the number and distribution of urban populations.

These trends point to sharp changes in conditions in urban areas. For a long period our cities have been accustomed to a rapidly expanding population. In the past, urban areas grew even more rapidly than the country at large. The great influx of European immigrants in the period from 1870 to 1914 settled largely in the commercial and industrial centers. Secondly, an internal shift from farm to city added constantly to urban numbers. Leon E. Truesdell, of the United States Bureau of the Census, estimates the extent of this movement at 750,000 annually between 1920 and 1930. The third factor in the growth of urban areas was the natural increase of its population through a surplus of births over deaths.

Today, our cities are facing a long period of slow growth, stability, or,

in some cases, a decline in the number of residents. From 1900 to 1930 urban population increased 108.5 per cent, growing from 30,000,000 to 68,000,000. In the period from 1930 to 1960 it is estimated that the growth will be but 8.4 per cent or from 68,000,000 to 75,000,000.¹ The urban birth rate has shown a startling decline. According to the National Resources Committee, only three cities of over 100,000 population had a birth rate in 1930 sufficiently high to maintain their population. Since 1930 the decline in birth rates has been even more rapid. It is estimated that at present the birth rates of the larger American cities fall by 20 per cent to 30 per cent of replacement. There is no prospect for a reversal in this trend. In fact, the declining percentage of the urban population that is foreign-born will tend to produce a continued fall in the birth rate of these areas.

From what sources can these deficiencies be met? Between 1931 and 1935 there was a net *emigration* from this country by over 103,000. In view of present sentiments, no change in immigration policy toward accepting larger numbers can be expected. The deficiency in urban replacements can be met only by a continued large-scale movement of

¹Segoe, L. "Urban Population and Industrial Trends." *Public Management*, June 1935.

rural population into the cities. During the depth of the depression the normal trend from rural to urban areas was reversed. With a resumption of industrial activity the normal movement to the cities was resumed to some extent. Statistics show, however, that all communities are not equally favored. Older industrial communities, where the opportunities for employment are not expanding, are failing already to attract a sufficient number to maintain their population. The number of cities in this position is increasing steadily. Other urban centers will barely maintain their present numbers. A few, strategically located, may continue to grow for some time.

FROM CITY TO SUBURB

The prospect for future urban growth and the problems of municipal planning are complicated further by the movement of people from urban to suburban communities. The study of urban conditions made by the National Resources Committee shows that the small satellite cities and suburban areas are growing at the expense of urban centers. In the past, new immigrants entering the city have filled the vacuum left by those moving outward. Today, this outward movement leaves blighted areas behind it. Districts in lower Manhattan have declined by 50 per cent from their peak number. This borough lost a net of 417,000 in population between 1920 and 1930 and has continued to lose in the succeeding nine years. City statistics show that the central area of New York City declined 25 per cent in population between 1920 and 1930;

the central area of Chicago declined 24 per cent, and of Pittsburgh 7 per cent in the same period.² The continued expansion of transportation facilities makes a continuation of this trend highly probable.

Coincident with these changes in the numbers of residents is a shift in the age distribution of our population. It is estimated that the national school population declined by some 1,000,000 between 1930 and 1937. The National Resources Committee predicts a decline of 50 per cent in the numbers under twenty years of age by 1980 if present trends continue. Such declines are particularly acute in urban areas where the birth rate today is less than 50 per cent that of rural areas. At the same time the number of people in the older age groups is increasing rapidly. In the period 1935 to 1975 it is predicted that the number between forty-five and sixty-five years of age will increase by 69 per cent and that the number of those over sixty-five years of age in the United States will grow from 7,500,000 to some 22,000,000 in 1980. In other words, the population of this nation is becoming older as it becomes stable and birth rates decline.

Such changes in the number and age of our urban population cannot but produce serious problems in municipal planning. This article cannot hope to discuss these questions in detail. The following major problems, however, are recognized easily.

1. The depopulation of the older,

²Veenstra, T. A. "Population Trends and Urban Planning." *Pittsburgh Business Review*, September 1935.

more central urban areas presents major problems of planning. If it continues at present rates, many municipal services in which fixed investments of large amounts have been made, will become obsolete. The need for schools, electric power, and transportation services in these areas will decline as they are dependent directly on numbers for their demand.

INCREASE IN SERVICE NECESSARY

At the same time the growth of population in the outer areas of the city results in an enlarged demand for expensive investment in exactly the same service industries. The result is not a simple transfer of services and investment from one area to another. The investments in the older areas are of a fixed nature, usually covered by municipal obligations. The effect of the shift of population is a duplication of facilities and investment without any comparable increase in the number of taxpayers. As a result, the cost and tax rate to support these services is increased.

2. If, as is often true, the suburban areas to which the population is moving lie beyond the borders of the central municipality, the result of this outward movement will be a decline in the number of taxpayers and an even greater decline in the value of taxable property in the city. No comparable decline will take place in the fixed overhead of city government. The net result will be a heavier per capita tax in an area in which the capacity to pay will be reduced because of declining business and investment income.

3. As residential areas in the central regions of cities decline, a shifting of retail business takes place. The establishment of branches of leading retail stores in suburban New Jersey, Westchester, and Long Island reflects the outward movement of population and retail business in the New York City area.

At the same time better transportation, better distribution of electric power, and lower labor and real estate costs are luring industries away from metropolitan centers. The study of D. B. Creamer of the University of Pennsylvania shows this shift from urban centers to suburban and satellite areas clearly. In the Middle Atlantic states the percentage of the total industrial jobs in large cities declined from 52 per cent in 1899 to 43 per cent in 1933, while the jobs in the outer industrial sections increased from 16 per cent to 24 per cent.

The result of this movement of commerce and industry away from the urban centers has been a sharp fall in real estate values. Again no proportionate reduction in the costs of municipal government can be made to meet the lessened ability to pay taxes.

4. The decline in the number of young persons and the increase in the older age groups result in a changing demand for municipal services. The need for public schools, children's libraries, playgrounds, etc., is decreasing and will continue to decrease. At the same time the demand for adult education and adult recreational facilities will increase. The larger number of dependent old people will probably increase the cost

of pensions and relief. Municipal planning in these fields must take careful account of these age shifts if it is to avoid the expenditure of money on services which will not be needed in the near future.

NO INCREASE IN TAX BASE

5. The effect of population trends on taxation and finance is of the most vital importance to municipal officials. It is improbable that they will find a tax base much if any larger in the future. As a result, if indiscriminate borrowing with the expectation that a larger future population will foot the bill is continued, the result will be bankruptcy. To a large extent, with municipal debts and taxes at their present high levels, improvements in the future must be paid for out of current funds if an unbearable tax load is to be avoided.

In those instances in which the nature of the fixed improvement fully justifies payment over a period of time, the term of the payment must be accurately adjusted to the lifetime of the improvement. Many municipalities in the past have been noted for their failure to observe this rule. An increasing tax base has absorbed mistakes of management. This cannot be expected in the future.

If the tax burden is to be distributed equitably, account must be taken of the changing values of real estate. Shifts in residential areas, commercial centers, and industrial plants are producing changed ca-

capacity of real estate to produce income. The values on which many present assessments are based were the result of expected expansion rather than actual income-producing capacity. As a result taxes now act as an unfair deterrent on the use of the property and tend to drive potential users to other areas, thus losing taxpayers to the city. It is questionable whether present municipal real estate taxation based on assessed valuation should be continued, or whether property taxation based on earning power would not be more equitable and effective.

This brief outline of the major problems facing municipal government as a result of population trends indicates the need of careful analysis and planning. It is suggested that each municipality should study its particular trends and that future construction and expenditure be based on the results of the study. Unless this is done, money will be spent unwisely, the debt load will be increased without adequate return, and the financial future of the city may be jeopardized. Careful planning based on accurate knowledge of population is essential to effective and economic city administration. In the past an increasing municipal income has tended to camouflage the effects of poor planning and injudicious spending. A stable or declining income reverses the picture, placing a high premium on planning and effective expenditure.

Well Springs of Our Laws

By HARVEY WALKER, *Ohio State University*

Sources of legislation introduced in Ohio Senate at 1939 session traced and compared with proposals of ten years previous.

TEN years ago the author made an inquiry among the members of the Ohio State Senate in order to ascertain the actual sources of legislative proposals. The results of this survey were reported in the September 1929 issue of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW. It was suggested at that time that other investigators should make similar inquiries in other states, and from session to session, in order to determine whether there was any uniformity in the findings from state to state and whether there were any discernible trends. If such studies were made, however, the author has not seen reports on the results.

With a view to such a test of technique it was considered desirable to make a second study in Ohio. Appropriately enough, the session which was studied was the fifth regular one since the original study—a lapse of just ten years.¹

Three hundred twenty-five bills were introduced in the Senate in 1939 compared with 267 in 1929. Due to the fact that the investigation had to be completed before the close of the session only 311 bills were included in the 1939 study. The remainder of 14 represented some last-minute measures, seven of

which became law. Of the 311, 147 were passed by the Senate, 97 of these were passed by the House, none were vetoed by the Governor—allowing 97 to become law as compared with 73 in 1929.

The student investigators reported that practically all of the members of the Senate coöperated with them wholeheartedly in supplying information. Only a few seemed reluctant to answer their questions. On 18 bills "no information" was reported. These bills have been credited to the individual members in the tabulations which follow. Five of them became law. It seems probable that the sponsors feared publicity on their origin when they were about to be passed.

It seems just as evident today as ten years ago that bills introduced by members as their own represent the smallest of the three categories suggested in the earlier study. In 1939 members originated 74 bills or 24 per cent of the total introduced as compared with 70 bills or 26 per cent in 1929. The success of these measures, however, seems to be on the increase. In 1929 only six bills, or 8 per cent of those which became law, were member-sponsored. In 1939 the number had increased to 16 and the percentage to 16, or double the 1929 figure.

As in the earlier study, there is little doubt that a number of bills were claimed by members as their

¹The data were gathered by three members of the author's class in legislation at the Ohio State University during the spring quarter of 1939—Carl Brandenberger, Robert Raudabaugh, and Harold Thornhill.

own which should really have been credited to the lobby. But this factor is probably no more significant in 1939 than in 1929 and may therefore be disregarded as not affecting comparisons.

The second category, that of proposed legislation advanced by governmental agencies, shows an increase in bills introduced but a decrease in percentage of success. In 1929 there were 78 bills, 29 per cent of the total; in 1939, 112 bills, or 36 per cent of the total. Of these, 38, or 52 per cent, became law in 1929 as compared with 44, or 45 per cent, in 1939.

Federal intervention in state affairs is represented by three bills sponsored by or for federal agencies—the WPA, the Social Security Board, and the Federal Housing Administration. One became law. State departments provided 81, or 26 per

cent of the total introduced, and 33, or 34 per cent of the total passed. In 1929 there were 42 state bills representing only 16 per cent of the number introduced and 18, or 24 per cent, became law. Administration proposals for legislation seem to be on the increase as well as administration success in securing the enactment of its suggestions.

As a matter of fact, in 1939 the Governor's office or spokesmen for him provided 14 bills of which 10 became law. These were referred to by the senators as administration measures. Many of them were introduced by the majority floor leader. On the other hand, the Adjutant General, an appointee of a previous administration, proposed two bills, neither of which became law. But the State Department of Education, also under Democratic control, suggested one measure which was passed.

OHIO SENATE

	1929	1939
Total number of bills introduced	267	311 ^a
Senate bills passed by Senate	140	147
Senate bills passed by House	83	97
Vetoed by Governor	10	0
Senate bills which became law	73	97 ^b
Per cent which became law	27	31

BILLS INTRODUCED
1929

	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Member bills	70	26	74	24
Lobby bills	119	45	125	40
Public bills	78	29	112	36
	267	100	311	100

BILLS PASSED
1929

	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Member bills	6	8	16	16
Lobby bills	29	40	37	39
Public bills	38	52	44	45
	73	100	97	100

^aFourteen other bills not included—see text.

^bActual final total 104—see text.

The Division of Insurance suggested 10 bills, five of which became law. The Department of Highways, the Department of Welfare, the Division of Conservation, and the State Tax Commission proposed six each. One, two, one, and three of these respectively were enacted into law.

Three measures each were advanced by the Department of Agriculture, the Division of Banks, and the Public Utilities Commission. Only the banking division was successful. It was given everything it asked. The Department of Liquor Control and the Gasoline Tax Division offered two each with no success. Departments proposing one bill each included Education, Finance, Health, the State Fire Marshal, the State Architect and Engineer, the Industrial Commission, the State Bridge Commission, the Securities Division, the Division of Building and Loan Associations, the Secretary of State, the Auditor of State, the Speaker of the House, the Commission on Stream Pollution, the Division of Shore and Beach Erosion, the Commission on Delinquent Taxes, and the Ohio World's Fair Commission.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILLS

Local governments and local officials provided 28 bills of which only nine became law in 1939. There were 36, or 13 per cent, of those introduced in 1929. Of these 20, or 27 per cent, became law. Thus there was a significant drop in the number and percentage of local bills introduced and an even greater decrease

in the success of this type of measure—from 27 per cent to 9 per cent.

Few local groups proposed more than one bill. The village officials in Cuyahoga County, the Cleveland Crime Commission, the Association of County Commissioners, the city of Toledo, and the County Treasurers' Association advanced two each. Among those suggesting one each were the cities of Oakwood, Miamisburg, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Dayton, the villages of Peninsula and Canal Winchester, the Common Pleas judges of Lorain County, the Municipal Court judges in Springfield, the Cleveland Metropolitan Park Board, the Cleveland Library Board, the Coshocton Board of Health, the Cleveland Board of Education, the Cleveland Health Department, the clerk of the Cleveland Municipal Court.

LOBBIES ACTIVE

The third category of bills is always of great interest. It includes proposals made by organizations, groups, and individuals who are generally considered together under the title of "lobby." In 1929, the proposals of this group included 119 bills, or 45 per cent of the total. In 1939 there were 125 bills, or 40 per cent. The effectiveness of this group remains the same. In 1929, 29 bills, or 40 per cent of those passed, were from the lobby. In 1939 the number of lobby bills enacted was 37, or 39 per cent of the total number which became law. As before, this category is the largest of the three.

The lobby may be roughly subdivided into four groups. The first includes regularly organized state-

wide or local groups whose legislative activities are only an incident to a larger program. These organizations are generally well financed and are quite successful in securing the enactment of legislation. Thirty-six such organizations had 69 bills introduced in 1939, of which 22 became law. The second group includes local groups of lawyers, often organized into bar associations. Such agencies accounted for 15 bills of which six were passed. Less well organized is the third group whose proposals are the result of a loosely knit council, usually convened for the sole purpose of securing the passage of a law, temporarily financed, and without definite leadership. This group accounted for 39 bills introduced of which only seven became law. The fourth and final group consists of individual corporations. Only two bills were presented by this type of sponsor at the 1939 session, one by the Ohio Bell Telephone Company and one by a local building and loan association. The telephone company's bill was enacted into law.

Several of these lobby groups are quite active; for example, the Ohio State Bar Association sponsored six bills, three of which became law. The Ohio State Firemen's Association secured the enactment of all three of the bills it sponsored, and the Association of Municipal Transportation Companies scored two out of two. Both the Ohio Education Association and the Ohio Federation of Labor were successful in securing two out of five bills which they advanced. The Citizens League of Cleveland and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce each proposed five bills, the league securing no laws and the

chamber one. The Prosecutors Section of the Ohio Bar Association proposed three and got one. The Ohio Safety Council advanced three and got none. Organizations which sponsored two and got one include the Ohio Medical Association and the Ohio Manufacturers Association. Those sponsoring two and getting none were the Cincinnati Auto Club, the State Building and Loan League, and the Retail Liquor Dealers Association. Those who concentrated on a single bill and were successful included the Ohio Association of Traffic Managers, the Ohio State Grange, the Ohio State Automobile Association, the Ohio Wine Growers Association, the Ohio Real Estate Board, the Ohio Hospital Association. Among those who failed to secure the enactment of the single bill which they proposed were the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the Isaac Walton League, the Ohio Civil Service Council, the State League of Women Voters, the Citizens Tax League of Ohio, the American Legion, the Ohio Federation of Churches, the International Order of Sleeping Car Conductors, the Typographical Union, the Ohio Truckers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Mahoning County Grange, and the Cincinnati Stationary Engineers Association.

Bar associations were comparatively successful. The Cleveland Bar Association secured enactment of two of the five measures it proposed, but the Cincinnati Bar Association had two and lost them both. The others which were successful in securing the one which they sponsored were the Lima Bar Association, the Columbus

Bar Association, the Jefferson County Bar Association, and the East Liverpool Bar. Five others had one bill all of which lost.

BUSINESS GETS LITTLE

Business groups not formally organized which advanced proposals were not so successful, with one exception. The insurance companies proposed four and got three. The police officers were successful in securing the enactment of the single bill which they proposed as were also the oil companies, the bond dealers, and the manufacturers of rat poison. All others failed including the railroads, the road builders and the retail gasoline dealers, with three proposals each. The optometrists and the abstractors of title failed with two each while one was unsuccessfully advanced by wholesale plumbers, liquor dealers, hairdressers, justices of the peace, coal mine operators, watchmakers, retail coal dealers, race-track owners, motor-vehicle dealers, and retired national guard officers.

Generally speaking, the facts and conclusions from the present study seem to confirm the findings of 1929, if some allowance is made for the lapse of time and for certain factors external to the legislative body, such as the greater vigor of executive leadership. But many such studies are needed. Other states should be examined. The technique is not difficult. A straightforward question usually receives a straightforward answer. When it does not, a little careful investigation will usually reveal the truth. At some subsequent time the author hopes to report upon a parallel study of the Ohio House

of Representatives made at the same time as this one. Further research in the work of the "most numerous house" will undoubtedly be more difficult because of the larger number of members and the larger number of bills. Such work should be undertaken by political scientists if the facts about legislation and pressure politics are to be secured.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 684)

amount for research is an economy.

This last point is probably the most important, for the others lean heavily upon it. Actually, those states in which legislative councils are functioning have not provided adequately for research. In Kansas \$20,000 per year is appropriated specifically for a research staff, in Kentucky \$10,000. The others appropriate amounts varying from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to cover all expenses of the councils, and in the case of the latter amount (Connecticut) a major proportion goes for research.

There is every indication not only that the legislative council idea will continue to spread but also that the importance of full-time, permanent, well financed research staffs will be increasingly recognized.

The legislature, after all, is responsible for the basic policies of the state, so it has every right and reason to seek to overcome the confusion caused by freak ill-considered ideas, pressure groups, special pleaders, and patent panaceas. The legislative council appeals as a sharp, effective weapon, but the weapon is a mere toy unless adequate research facilities are provided.

A Taft in City Hall

By MIRIAM ROHER, *National Municipal League*

Son of the 27th President of the United States, ending his first term as member of Cincinnati's P.R.—city manager council, quietly practices democracy in his home town.

AFTER almost two years of being a minority member of the proportional representation-elected city council of Cincinnati, Ohio, Charles P. Taft is going to run again. Why?

He finds the question an odd one. "Why?" he exclaims, a little puzzled, "Well, because I'm interested, interested as *any* citizen is interested in making his community a better place to live in!"

If the line of questioning were pursued, no doubt Charles P. Taft would admit that there are things which differentiate him from "any" citizen. But that his first impulse is to class himself in such a general, modest category is a curious index to the man.

He doesn't even look like "any" citizen, although his appearance is modest and pleasant. He appears younger than his forty-two years, and there is that something about his clothes and general appearance which bespeaks a background that included the Taft School, Yale, an established law practice, and an ancestry that "arrived" some time ago.

His very name carries rare distinction. Alphonso Taft, his grandfather, was Secretary of War, later Attorney General in Grant's cabinet, then Minister to Austria, and next to Russia, under President Arthur. William Howard Taft, his father, was twenty-seventh President of the United States and later Chief Justice

of the Supreme Court. Robert A. Taft, his brother, is United States Senator from Ohio and a contender for the presidency in 1940.

Councilman Taft is a person of achievements in his own right, even aside from his place in the nine-member council of a city which has been called "the best governed" in the United States. That Cincinnati has been so extravagantly dubbed is due in no small part to the efforts of Mr. Taft himself and other now hallowed leaders of the city charter movement of 1924-25.

A few modest footnotes in Mr. Taft's book, *City Management: The Cincinnati Experiment*, describe some of his work in connection with those early believers in the possibility and practicability of good government. More ample records show that Charles P. Taft was with Henry Bentley and Murray Seasongood and the others from the beginning of the attempt to upset the Hynicka machine; that in 1924 he was temporarily a member of the executive committee of the nascent City Charter Committee which that year triumphantly forced through a city manager charter for Cincinnati; that he took his place on the first board of directors of the same organization when in 1925 it was formally launched; that he was president of the famous Cincinnati Association that same year; that he has been high in the councils

and support of the Charter Committee (which has kept the manager plan and P.R. intact in Cincinnati) ever since; and that when the need arose he ran for the position of and was elected county prosecutor in 1926; and finally, that when asked to serve, he became a successful City Charter Committee candidate for the city council of Cincinnati in 1937.

It goes without saying that, as Charles P. Taft puts it, there is "no love lost" between him and the local Republican party. It was the local Republican party which supplied the name and the excuse for the Hynicka machine which, until 1926, ruled Cincinnati by long-distance telephone from New York and gave it the deserved name of "worst governed city in the United States." It was the Republican-Hynicka machine which was thrown out by the efforts of Mr. Taft and his Charter Committee cohorts. It is the Republican machine, now divested of Hynicka and its former lucrative power, which has twice tried to rid itself of proportional representation by forcing popular referenda on its retention, the last one as recently as June 1939. It is the Republican machine which even now succeeds in electing four of the nine-man city council; another four, among whom Mr. Taft is numbered, being Charter Committee stalwarts.

(The ninth member is an independent.)

Then Mr. Taft has deserted the family fold and "gone" Democratic or worse? Not at all. In 1936 Charles P. Taft was one of the three or four

top political advisers and assistants of Alfred Landon, Republican nominee for the presidency of the United States. His favorite snapshot of himself dates from that year, when he was photographed wearing a big smile and a Landon emblem. In 1936 he wrote a book called, significantly, *You and I—and Roosevelt*.

And he has been

on the Republican speakers list in every national campaign since 1928—not, however, in Ohio.

To Charles P. Taft this curious division of party allegiance, this levying of war on the local branch of the same party to which he devotes time, brains, and perhaps money, nationally, is neither curious nor anomalous. His reasons for so believing give the key to his entire political philosophy.

"A local organization of a national political party, primarily interested in jobs and patronage, is more of a deterrent than an asset in a national election," he says. "That doesn't include primaries, of course. A local organization is often necessary there. But once you get to the election itself, the organization is a handicap. I think Roosevelt himself realizes that



Times Wide World
CHARLES P. TAFT

in 1940 Hague, Pendergast, Kelly, and what's-his-name in Memphis will not really aid the Democrats to win—in fact they're a handicap. Events, the nature of the campaign, and the candidate himself will determine whether he wins."

Which means that Mr. Taft believes in nonpartisanship, locally?

Again, not at all. He nodded when he was shown the list of qualifications for an ideal councilman drawn up by the City Manager League of Toledo,¹ but with one item he emphatically disagreed.

"CHESTNUTS"

"There's that old chestnut 'non-partisan,'" he grimaced. "I'm not nonpartisan and I don't think I have any right to be. Our success in Cincinnati is due to the fact that we do have a party—the City Charter Committee—to back us up and carry on from year to year. It spreads the necessary enthusiasm and generates purpose. By partisan, of course, I don't mean *nationally* partisan. National issues have no place in local politics. Our City Charter Committee is a local party only."

Nor does Mr. Taft find it necessary to divide his mind into two leak-proof categories in order to keep harmony between his national ideas and his local ideas. "The problems we discuss in council all the time are just the local side of the problems Congress is discussing—public works, relief, flood control, health, stream pollution, housing."

To Mr. Taft the words "problems

we discuss in council" do not ring queerly at all. Remembering the political worthies described by Lincoln Steffens and more recently by J. T. Salter,² the interviewer asked Mr. Taft how much of his time goes to the "problems we discuss in council" and how much to the job of neighborhood Santa Claus which most big city officeholders are reputed to assume as a major duty.

His face took on the same surprised look as when he was asked "why" he will run for election. "Oh, sure, I get one or two people a month who want me to talk to the fire department or the police department. A few people never learn. But most of them know that neither I nor any one of the other eight councilmen can do anything for them. They simply don't ask us. Besides, councilmen always get in trouble trying to do 'favors' for everybody, you know. We're all glad that the system of non-interference with administration under the manager plan gives us an out when people do ask for favors."

He brushed the subject aside as one too unimportant to talk about.

"I spend from a day and a half to two days a week attending council committee meetings and council meetings, sometimes more when there are special hearings," he continued. "There's always an argument." He smiled reminiscently. "We don't often break up on party lines, though. Sometimes it may be a viaduct, sometimes it may be flood control or sewage disposal, sometimes it's Bingo, always it's something. We get fifty

¹See editorial, "Councilmen—the Key to the Situation," NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, September 1939, p. 609.

²See, for instance, "A Politician: Old Style," by J. T. Salter, NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, July 1938, p. 353.

to a hundred in the audience at every regular meeting. In the old days, you know, nobody ever came."

Every member of the Cincinnati council belongs to three council committees. Mr. Taft's are welfare, sewers, and finance. With the first he is chiefly preoccupied, both from natural interest and because he is chairman. The committee considers only matters of welfare policy, and meets from time to time with groups who wish hearings on matters of general principle. The Workers' Alliance, the Union of Professional and Office Workers, and Labor's Nonpartisan League are among those who have been heard. The committee consults with the city manager and the welfare director on its findings.

Mr. Taft himself also maintains an informal complaints bureau in his own office for those individual relief clients who feel that justice has not been done them. An average of 160 a month come to see him, through his secretary, who spends about half her time interviewing them. She reports to him, and he has found it necessary to send inquiries on about two-thirds of these cases to the city manager. Mr. Taft does not deal with the welfare administration except on emergency inquiries, nor does he give any complainant any written authorization. From the time he satisfies himself that there may be some merit in a complaint, the matter is followed up through the manager, and additional action has resulted in about half the complaints referred to him.

The rent policy of the city gives Councilman Taft most concern. The welfare department allows rent to clients only when there is no employ-

able member in the family, or in cases where there are small children and eviction is threatened by service of a court order.

"It's bad for the client's morale, and it's bad for landlords—they simply can't afford to keep up their buildings, and the apartments deteriorate miserably," he says emphatically. "And yet we can't find a solution to the question of where we're going to raise the money to finance a proper rent policy. We'd need about \$200,000 more—and the state doesn't permit any special local taxes for the purpose. This is the worst part of the whole relief problem, and I don't know a single big city, outside of New York and Milwaukee, that has solved it."

PEOPLE IN TROUBLE

Mr. Taft's local interest ties in well with his national activities. This year he is chairman of the National Committee of the Community Mobilization for Human Needs, a director of the local Community Chest, vice-president of the Cincinnati YMCA, secretary of the Children's Hospital, and treasurer of the colored Industrial School of Cincinnati.

Noblesse oblige? On the face of it, yes. The Taft name and social position, combined with the philanthropic tone of Charles P. Taft's affiliations, paint a picture which would seem to be tinged with the dingy gray of sweet charity for the poor, dear masses. There is nothing to combat the impression but Charles P. Taft himself and the way he talks about his ideas and his activities. That nullifies it completely. He is in-

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Design for Pennsylvania Localities

By H. F. ALDERFER, *Executive Secretary*
Institute of Local Government, Pennsylvania State College

Reorganization of local governments along up-to-date, efficient lines—home rule, manager plan for counties and cities, strong merit system, improved financial procedure—must come if smaller units of government are to be preserved as part of our democratic processes.

SOME TIME ago in these pages we attempted to summarize the status of state-local relationships in Pennsylvania and to evaluate critically the trend toward centralization.¹ In that article we stated that the local units would be poorly implemented to resist modern pressure toward centralization until they adopted more modern and efficient governmental forms and administrative methods. Now, we would like to sketch a series of improvements for Pennsylvania local government which are practical, acceptable, and worthwhile. We believe that such suggestions could crystallize into direction that movement for better local government, now bubbling up sporadically, but, as the saying goes, "getting nowhere fast."

In outlining possible changes, certain principles of government must be held fundamental. What has worked well in the past should be retained. Successful habits and traditions cannot be upset for the sake of academic theory or reformist enthusiasm. Improvements should be made piecemeal. Regardless of how great their theoretical advantages, changes which are impossible because of political and other non-rational

reasons should not be considered. Legislation should be drafted to allow optional choices and popular referenda on basic alterations in governmental structure. Functions now locally exercised should be continued so until demonstrated to be within the modern field of the state or national governments. Above all, the power to collect taxes should not necessarily presume to carry with it the power to spend the money. Nor should the right of one level of government to legislate for lower levels imply that it should also control their administration.

With these general principles as a guide, the important subjects should now be considered. For a number of years consolidation of local units has been brought forward as a necessary reform. The recent abolition of the poor district and the division of its powers between the state and the county have eliminated this most glaringly ineffectual unit of local government. But this required a major economic crisis and a terrific relief job. Even so, there have been political revolts against the new arrangement, but most likely it will resist major erosions.

Second-class townships have been slated for liquidation in some camps. Their most important function is the supervision of township roads. In

¹H. F. Alderfer, "Centralization in Pennsylvania," NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, April 1938, pp. 189-196.

recent years the highway department of the commonwealth had been absorbing control of these roads, but in the last legislature supervision of the township system with an outright grant of money was returned to the township supervisors. Whatever arguments may be raised for or against this step, it makes clear the comparative political influence of the officers of the fifteen hundred second-class townships against all comers.

If, however, the second-class township is to remain a permanent and integral part of Pennsylvania local government, its number should be reduced to five hundred so that it may remain an effectual area of administration. In many of the forest counties there are sparsely settled townships in which per capita costs of schools, roads, and elections are exorbitantly high. Either these townships should be consolidated with adjoining units by mandatory legislation when there is a population per square mile below a certain figure fixed by law; or the county should retire their land from residential and farming uses after abandonment under regular zoning procedures made possible by the 1937 legislature, gradually evacuating these townships from activity, and redistributing inhabited areas to other townships.

Because of the large amount of delinquent taxes on marginal and submarginal lands, the county is in a good position to initiate and carry out a policy for such reorganization of rural government. Most definitely, it is the county rather than the state that should care for the government of these waste areas.

There has been much talk about the consolidation of rural fourth-class school districts into county units for purposes of administration. Better, but not cheaper, public school education would result in these communities. If this would be evolved on the basis of local option, it would prove agreeable to all concerned. Mandatory legislation, however, would add to the chaos that now exists in school finance throughout the commonwealth.

CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

Consolidation in the metropolitan areas of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh has long been before the public eye, and proposals for accomplishing this are now in various stages of progress or desuetude. The city and county of Philadelphia, nominally united since 1854, are due for a more modern consolidation of offices if lasting improvement is to be made in the Philadelphia local government confusion.

The metropolitan plan for greater Pittsburgh, which has had a thorough tossing about for the past ten years, has not yet materialized, largely on account of the opposition of local units in the county of Allegheny which were to be merged with Pittsburgh in a federated plan of government. Closer governmental unity of this metropolitan region is certainly in order. Perhaps piecemeal and voluntary coöperation in certain functions should be undertaken for the sake of developing coöperative habits before any drastic changes are made. This might easily be accomplished in certain specific fields of police, fire,

traffic, planning, street, and health administration without undermining the independence of the local units.

As far as consolidation of counties is concerned, there is little use worrying about the possibilities. This is not only politically impossible but there is no real evidence that any savings would be accomplished. All except a few counties are large enough to be administered effectively and in exceptional cases coöperation of contiguous counties could be explored. Consolidation and annexation laws for other local units are already adequately provided if the units concerned voluntarily undertake such procedures.

STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

All common varieties of governmental structure appear in Pennsylvania local units. The three largest cities, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Scranton, have strong mayor governments. The forty-six third-class cities operate under the commission plan, while boroughs have strong councils and weak executives. First- and second-class townships are governed by boards of commissioners and supervisors respectively without elected executives. The county has a board of three commissioners and more than a dozen elected officers who are in complete charge of their offices. These forms have shown the defects common to their species but have proved adequate to conditions in the past. Generally speaking, they are of sufficient basic soundness for present conditions if two major improvements are made.

The first is a legislative grant of

power for all cities to install city manager government if the people of the community vote in favor of it. Such power has been established by constitutional amendment which, however, has never been implemented by an enabling act of the legislature. Boroughs and first-class townships are already empowered to establish by ordinance the office of manager, but such power might also be given to the electors. School districts operate now on the basis of a board of directors and a superintendent of schools. There is no need to grant this power to second-class townships. Proportional representation, whatever its merits or demerits, should not be tied to the manager plan but should be considered as a separate proposal.

The second improvement necessary is the reorganization of the internal structure of county government. Extreme decentralization is the theme of the present set-up. The county is now and should be the dominant unit of government in rural areas. If it is to keep its present functions, to absorb those that may be lost by townships, and to receive new ones definitely local in nature, it must modernize its machinery or the state will continue its invasions. What is needed is an elective board of county commissioners and a controller, the former with power to appoint all the administrative officers who are now elected. The county commissioners should be comparable in power to the commission in cities of the third class. This body with the county controller should exercise all the financial powers of the county and provisions should be adopted so that both com-

mission and voters could establish the position of county manager.

IMPROVED PERSONNEL

Toning up of their personnel systems rates high in the needs of Pennsylvania local governments. While cities are provided with civil service commissions, personnel practices leave much to be desired. The laws governing the systems in the larger cities are standard in form, but those applying to cities of the third class lack the scope and intent common to most laws. Civil service commissioners have not shown great enthusiasm in developing modern personnel practices even when the laws are carried out according to letter. In third-class cities, commissioners are without compensation and spend little time at their jobs while secretaries to the commission are in most cases ex-officio. Political and personal factors still operate too powerfully in the choice, promotion, and retirement of personnel. None of the other local units has civil service provisions. Laws covering the whole host of borough, township, and county employees that constitute the backbone of local government should be enacted with provision for administration applicable to small units. Two methods to supply the average local unit with up-to-date practices and procedures, leaving the choice of the personnel to local appointing powers, suggest themselves. One is to establish a state-wide civil service commission in the Department of Internal Affairs; the other for the leagues of municipalities to undertake this ser-

vice. At present, neither agency is equipped to do this.

The most heartening recent development in the field of personnel has been the programs of in-service training for local officers. In Pennsylvania, schools for police and firemen have already been organized; they should be set up for all types of municipal officers. Under the federal George-Deen appropriation through the State Department of Public Instruction, real progress is now possible. Colleges and universities, along with other semi-public agencies, are alive to the problem and have been coöperating in sponsoring meetings, issuing bulletins, developing correspondence courses, and conducting research for various organizations of local officials. As has been aptly said, in-service training has breathed life into the dead bones of civil service. It remains the greatest hope for better local government today.

THE FIELD OF FINANCE

Finance, as always, is the heart of public administration and of the greatest interest to the taxpayer. It is in this field that there are many grave defects. Local governments in Pennsylvania rely too much upon the general property tax. The great amount of tax delinquency is witness to this. By subsidies and by taking over certain services the state has lent a helping hand in schools, highway finance, and relief. But school districts continue to claim top millages while highways lay heavy toll on the local tax dollar. The largest share of state highway appropriations

has been spent on non-urban roads. Cities have remained responsible for a great majority of street mileage without sufficient help from the gasoline and motor vehicle taxes.

Two important improvements suggest themselves in the distribution of taxes. One is increased grants from highway-user taxes to cities, boroughs, and first-class townships, and the imposition of an income tax for school purposes. This would give real estate much needed relief and allow municipalities to expand their other functions according to need.

Local governments in Pennsylvania have still great distances to travel to the ideal of modern financial procedure. Laws, establishing mandatory budgets and annual reports for all local units on forms prescribed by the State Department of Internal Affairs, have in the main worked beneficially. Many units have adopted better accounting systems, but still a large number use these prescribed forms only as state reports, falling back on their own systems for the practical purposes of running their municipalities. This not only nullifies the intent of the legislation but casts some shadow of doubt over the possibility of effectual state supervision. These laws will remain in effect, however, and, if intelligent administration of them continues, will be a wedge in the advance toward sound financial administration.

The system for the assessment of real property for local taxation is a shambles. While a number of cities and a few larger counties have adopted "scientific" systems of assess-

ment by rule of thumb. Even in third-class counties where legislation established a county-wide unit assessment under a board of assessment and revision of taxes appointed by the county commissioners, progress has been slow. For the most part assessors are still elected or appointed without qualification and serious inequities persist.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

In order to strengthen the assessment procedure, a county-wide system as is established in third-class counties has been brought forward as the remedy, but there are two qualifications which must be made to that. The majority of the five third-class counties which now operate under the county-wide system of assessments with appointed assessors have not materially improved their assessment systems. Then, too, the county commissioners in the fourth- to eighth-class counties have more power in making their assessments uniform and equitable than they now use. More important in the picture are adequate assessment manuals, assessors schools, and the development of improved techniques.

As long as the county is what it is today, the added power that might come from a county-wide system of assessments could prove harmful. While it is true that assessors should be appointed rather than elected, provided merit rather than politics is the guiding factor, we believe that election is better than appointment when the appointing officers are politically inclined. Likewise, whether appointed or elected, assessors might

well be chosen from the assessment division rather than from the outside. Right or wrong, most citizens resent assessment of property by outsiders.

In the field of tax collection, legislation has been introduced during the past few sessions to eliminate the elected tax collector and make a county-wide unit of tax collection under the county treasurer. All these efforts have been defeated and it is not likely that such a system will come to Pennsylvania in the near future. Reforms in the tax collection procedure, however, must be made. Instead of centralizing the tax collection in the hands of the county treasurer (who is an elected officer usually deep in politics) it might be well to do what has been done in cities of the third class where the city treasurer has been made collector for all local taxes within the area. This might well be encouraged in boroughs and first-class townships.

Likewise, the fee system for compensating tax collectors should have a thorough overhauling with the idea of making the position a salaried one where the tax collections exceed a certain figure. Tax collectors also should be made to operate their business more uniformly. A recent development has been the law requiring them to make annual reports to the Department of Internal Affairs. But annual reports without advice, supervision, and more detailed legal regulations are a waste of time and effort.

Auditing, accounting, cost accounting, purchasing, and reporting are all fields in which progress must be made through education and training of those who hold offices and positions

responsible for this work. Under present conditions little help can be expected from state departments. From some quarter must come help in making up uniform manuals and practices in these various fields. Whether the leagues of cities, boroughs, or townships, or the colleges and universities, or taxpayers groups, or all three step into the breach, this important work must be carried on.

Proposals have been made to change the constitutional and statutory provisions on indebtedness in order to make the limitation more flexible and adjustable to conditions. While there is a high rate of indebtedness within the local units of the state, defaults in Pennsylvania have been few and far between. But a great amount of money is owing and needs for additional capital for improvements are on the increase. New limitations, wise as they may be, will not alter the debt situation, because they will not bring down the percentage of the tax dollar that goes for present debt service.

LINE FUNCTIONS

This bird's-eye view of Pennsylvania local government will not allow detailed inquiries into each line function of local government. Moreover, there is no uniform pattern of accomplishment throughout the state. Much depends upon the personnel in charge of the program, the desires and demands of the community, and the background of the particular function. It might be said that, in the branches of administration that utilize mechanized equipment, the greatest

accomplishment toward modernization has been achieved. This is due largely to activities of industry and business marketing these products, and is most obvious in equipment in the fields of fire fighting, police radio, street construction, transportation, and public works.

Likewise, those functions which are continually in the public eye or are potentially newspaper issues by way of involving direct services to the people, are usually more highly developed than those which have no direct public news value. The important problem is not so much the supplying of necessary services to the people as it is the administration of them with order and effectiveness. The fundamental need is to bolster the staff functions so that the line functions may be brought up to a higher efficiency.

To suggest a program for the allocation of new functions and the reallocation of old ones or parts of old ones is exceedingly difficult. Local governments, as a rule, do not welcome new duties and responsibilities, especially in the light of depleted budgets. Nor are their officials inclined to look around for more work than already devolves upon them. This is one of the reasons why the state and national governments are in an advantageous position in the distribution of newer functions. The lack of interest on the part of local authorities in newer fields such as planning, housing, and welfare has succeeded in pushing such activities into higher levels of government where departments often appear to seek new activities.

Probably this problem can be solved only by gradual experimentation and adjustment. Methods of conference, legislation, and regulation, involving as they do the incomplete knowledge of men, have not shown success in making order out of chaos. Whatever opinions be on the righteousness of home rule, it is a reality that state and national governments are playing a dominating hand in new activities whether or not these activities are inherently local in character.

REALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS

Even more complex is the reallocation of old functions, which have, for one reason or another, been brought into the limelight as needing improved or more uniform administration. State agencies have already taken over certain parts of police, highway, education, health, and welfare activities. Various forces give impetus to this trend. One is the ability of the higher levels of government to finance more adequately newer developments. Armed with legislative, taxing, and appropriation powers, control of administration follows. The state and the national governments have an active and unified policy in regard to the newer functions of government. It is a sad commentary on affairs that the great majority of career government administrators, researchers, and technicians are in the higher levels of government. These are the ones who, behind the scenes, implement the dynamic policy with knowledge and methods.

If it should happen that the smaller

units of government, as the township, should lose such functions as assessment, tax collection, the administration of justice, and others, it may not even be the county that will absorb them, for the same conditions of administration apply there. It may be the state which will finally assume control even though maintaining local headquarters in local jurisdictions. It needs repeating again and again that counties in Pennsylvania are the crux of the whole situation. If they are not re-organized and modernized, they will surely lose a golden opportunity to keep intact home rule and local independence.

AGENCIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The most pathetic fact about Pennsylvania local government is that there has been no capable agency responsible for its continuous development and evolution. The General Assembly, by its almost absolute right to legislate, is its legal guide and mentor, but the very nature of this body renders such service impossible. Every session of the legislature sees innumerable bills concerning local government introduced and the results in terms of approved legislation have been disheartening not only from the viewpoint of local government but from that of a desperate champion of the democratic process. The committees considering the legislation have never exhibited a thorough knowledge or a broad interest in local government nor have they attempted to utilize consistently the agencies and groups best informed. True, public hearings are

often held, but detailed study and long range planning are practically absent. Highly organized and vocal minority groups influence results far out of proportion to their real interest. Local officials are rarely brought in for their experience and guidance. In short, legislation on local government has always been haphazard even at its best.

Realizing the deficiency of this method, the legislature set up a local government commission which operated for two legislative terms. While this was a start in the right direction, it was not too successful. The commission had a small appropriation and was forced to lean upon the services of the staff of an outside agency. There are now two permanent legislative commissions on state and local government. Friends of local government in Pennsylvania fervently hope that they will live up to their great opportunities and responsibilities.

As the legislature has been derelict in regard to local legislation, the state administration has no better record in spite of the fact that more duties are devolving upon a number of its departments. There is little evidence of a sound knowledge and understanding of local administration. Naturally, none of these departments has attempted to develop a program for local government as a whole, this being alien to their legislative mandates.

Each of the statutory groups of local units has its own association. Thus, there is the League of Cities of the Third Class, the Boroughs Association, the Association of County

Commissioners, the Association of First Class Townships, and Township Supervisors Association. In addition, there are a large number of associations of specific classes of officers such as the sheriffs, magistrates, tax collectors, and a host of others. In the past there has been little or no unity of action among these units until the formation of the Conference of Allied Local Government Officials. The union has been in existence for two legislative terms and has been primarily interested in preserving home rule by legislative means. The crying need for Pennsylvania with its twenty-six hundred local units is an active union of all these local associations with a permanent staff and headquarters working year round in the interest of municipalities. Such an organization could act as a clearing house for technical information, plan a long range legislative policy and serve the local officers in a hundred ways.

FERTILE FIELD FOR RESEARCH

Every field in local government and administration in Pennsylvania beckons the research worker. The sky still is the limit; there is room for all agencies who have the welfare of the local units at heart. Most of the research done so far has been of an analytical and descriptive nature. It provided a background for ameliorative legislation if properly used. But it has been of little use to the local officer pressed by immediate problems of office. What is needed is a compilation of manuals which will aid and guide officials in the administration of their work. Especi-

ally would they be welcomed by incoming officers and employees who are taken from the ranks without any previous knowledge of public business. Most of the research now available has been done by one well organized taxpayers' agency, four institutions of higher learning, and an occasional study by some public or semi-public organization. No one has yet laid down a broad program for such research in Pennsylvania. In the near future, interested agencies should join coöperatively in making an inventory of what should be done.

At the present moment, there is less organized citizen interest directing its attention to improved local government than at any time within the last twenty-five years. There are few active citizen groups alive to present problems on a state-wide basis. As a result, legislation involving fundamental changes in local government is practically at a standstill and there is little immediate hope for the future. Even so obvious a need as the reorganization of Philadelphia's city government fell by the legislative wayside during the last session of the General Assembly in spite of the efforts of many city organizations and civic-minded individuals. Naturally, without continuous demand those entrusted with the making of laws refuse to go out of their way in changing the status quo. The citizens of Pennsylvania have dealt themselves out of the game of local government in spite of their tremendous past, present, and future interests. It remains for the three levels of government then to fight for its control with a few organizations of

influential taxpayers "kibitzing" over their shoulders. It takes no master mind to foretell the result.

It is a fact that the average student going through public school and college knows a great deal more about the national government than he does about local government in his home community. Educators are prone to spend more time on the glittering generalities of national life than on the cold and specific facts of local government. The price that we pay is ignorance of those things which are nearest to our own interests. Recently, however, the direction has changed slightly and perhaps the educational movement back to an interest in local units will bear real fruit before it is too late.

One of the more hopeful aspects has been that a number of educational institutions in the commonwealth have embarked upon a program for training young men and women for public service. But so far most of these graduates have landed in state and national services. Only rarely, and then in the large metropolitan units, is it possible to place any such young hopefuls in local governments. In some way or other, local units in Pennsylvania must welcome not only new machinery and methods, but also new blood. If this does not come about, it means another step in their decline.

IS THERE ANY HOPE?

Is there any hope for the improvement of Pennsylvania local government? It would be easy to answer in the affirmative and allay fears to the contrary, but there are deep prob-

lems involved, deeper than any of the factors that appear on the surface of logic and reason. With our educational investment, with radio and print at everyone's beck and call every minute of the day, with men of brains, experience, and knowledge available, all material resources for improvement are at hand.

It is alarming to note that there has been scarcely any improvement in Pennsylvania local government since the World War—at least not enough to offset its vastly increased responsibilities and problems. Municipalities generally have lost that confidence which is brought by a balanced budget. Many municipalities are now faced by a need for expensive public works but must depend upon the state or national government for financial aid. Possibly we are reaching the point where the original institutions lose their power of elasticity and adjustment. Perhaps our municipal institutions, as a part of our larger cultural equipment, have played out their powers of growth. At least the future does not look encouraging.

But we know what we must do. We have the means at our disposal. All agencies must bend their efforts to preserve our local units and make them work. Government—state, national, and local—associations of local officers, educational institutions, citizen groups—all must play their part. Only by courage and action can the orderly process of democracy continue through this cloudy period of our history. The price we must pay is vigilance—and sound administration.

Thrift via County Consolidation

By H. F. SCOVILLE, *Director,*
Los Angeles County Bureau of Administrative Research

A resumé of functional and departmental consolidations, and of cooperative agreements between counties, in California.

LEGAL restrictions continue to play a large part in the efforts of California counties to integrate their governments and to make the structural changes required by changing social need. Ten of California's counties operate under charters; the other forty-eight are governed entirely by statute. The chartered counties have considerably more freedom in effecting integration than do the code-governed counties.

Changes that have been made recently, largely in departmental consolidations, have been engendered by economic necessity, rather than by a desire for structural reorganization. The tremendous increase in expenditures for charities has forced the governing boards to attempt various combinations of services to reduce expenditures for general county government. What further changes would be made, if the counties had the power, is, of course, conjectural.

The move for consolidation of county functions received an impetus during the depression years beginning in 1930; it has continued because of the accelerated charity load. Although some consolidations have always existed, the increase in consolidations may be laid primarily to the desires of boards of supervisors to keep the tax rate as low as possible.

The tax-raising power of the various counties covers a wide range,

from the sparsely settled mountainous counties to the industrialized county with two and one-half million population. Generally they might be grouped in three classes: (1) The heavily populated counties, as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Alameda; (2) the "in-between" counties, with agriculture and industry, as Santa Barbara and Monterey; (3) the mountainous counties, as Alpine and Mono.

Naturally, the opportunity for and the necessity of consolidation and integration varies with the type of county.

Since the organization of the city-county of San Francisco, there has been no major change in county structure in California. The perennial discussion of major changes in Los Angeles County was recently revived by two resolutions introduced in the Los Angeles city council. One resolution called for separation, the other for the development of a borough system. At this time it is not possible to predict what plan, if any, may be offered to the voters for consideration.

For the past fifteen or twenty years there have been recurring movements in Los Angeles for city-county consolidation or for separation of the city of Los Angeles from the remainder of the county. Studies have been made by various groups, official and unofficial, none of whom

recommended separation. All of these groups have recommended some plan of consolidation of the governments or of their functions.

No other proposals for consolidation of counties in the state are under consideration at present.

NO CHARTER CHANGES

During the last year no basic changes in chartered organization for counties took place in California. Los Angeles County led the way in internal organization by establishing the office of chief administrative officer, who at present is operating successfully under ordinance provisions. Members of the board of supervisors have indicated that in the event this plan of organization continues its success, the county executive or county manager plan will be submitted to the voters for a charter amendment.

San Bernardino County reports that a flood control district was recently formed to protect that county from the ravages of flood waters and to conserve water resources.

The functions of the state and the counties are drawn distinctly in California and no major changes were made during the last session of the legislature. Several proposals were introduced in the legislature during the 1939 session, but none of these received favorable action. Changes suggested were concerned chiefly with charities, the most significant being the proposal to turn the unemployment load over to the counties.

San Bernardino County reports that it has recently extended its county service by the employment of a predatory animal control officer

who has no connection with the state's division of fish and game. The county of Los Angeles is considering the possibility of transferring the functions formerly carried on by its rehabilitation department to the state.

During the last year there were some consolidations of county functions within the counties. Among these were the consolidation of the county surveyor with the road department in Riverside County, the purchasing agent with the county clerk in Marin County, the highway commissioner with the county surveyor in San Bernardino County, and the county coroner with the public administrator in San Luis Obispo County. Santa Barbara County reports that the supervision of county parks has been placed under the direction of the board of supervisors, with each supervisor in charge of the parks in his respective district.

Los Angeles County has undergone some major changes in county departments, wherein the labor coördinating bureau was abolished and part of its functions transferred to the civil service commission; the rehabilitation department has been discontinued and consolidated with the charities department; the department of budget and research has become the bureau of administrative research attached to the office of the county administrator.

DEPARTMENTS CONSOLIDATED

Throughout the state there exists a number of consolidations of county functions, tending to eliminate the number of county departments. Forty-four of the state's fifty-eight

counties report that the offices of coroner and public administrator have been combined under one head. The fiscal offices have proved to be the next most important numerically in consolidations: nine counties have combined the treasurer and tax collector; three counties, the assessor and tax collector; five counties, the sheriff and tax collector; five counties, the clerk, auditor, and recorder; three counties, the clerk and recorder; two counties, the recorder and treasurer; three counties, the auditor and recorder; five counties, the clerk and auditor; and one county has combined the county clerk, the clerk of the Superior Court, and the purchasing agent. In three counties the sheriff and coroner have been combined and in two counties the engineer has been combined with the surveyor.

Other combinations of departments of which we have record of only one in each instance follow: public welfare and probation, public welfare and sealer of weights and measures, treasurer and public administrator, agricultural commissioner and sealer of weights and measures, district attorney and coroner, district attorney and public administrator, sheriff and public administrator, superintendent of the hospital and health officer, forester and road commissioner, highway commissioner and surveyor, purchasing agent and county statistician, regional planning and building departments, crossing guards and sheriff, health officer and pound-master, purchasing agent and chief administrative officer, forester and fire warden, fish and game warden, and parks and recreation.

On the other side of the picture there have been a few separations of functions. In El Dorado County the former combination of sheriff and tax collector has been abolished and two offices have been established. In Mono County the recorder was separated from the combined offices of clerk, auditor, and recorder. In Ventura County a road commissioner has been established, thus relieving the surveyor of some of his duties. Sierra County reports the establishment of a County Welfare Department.

The operation of tuberculosis sanatoriums has been the type of service most frequently carried on jointly by two or more counties. Placer County and twelve other counties operate jointly the tuberculosis hospital at Weimar. Calaveras and San Joaquin Counties operate the Bret Harte Sanatorium at Murphys, and Kings and Tulare Counties also operate a joint sanatorium. One tri-county joint operation of a tuberculosis sanatorium is carried on by Madera, Merced, and Stanislaus Counties.

Other coöperative arrangements include the operation of a ferry by Butte and Glenn Counties, an employment office by Mono and Inyo Counties, the employment of a public health nurse by Mono and Alpine Counties, and the operation of a joint county hospital and a joint union high school by Plumas and Sierra Counties.

Two counties report that they utilize the services of another county upon a cost basis. Mariposa County hospitalizes its indigents in Merced County, and prisoners of Mendocino County, who are committed for more

than thirty days, are sent to the Sonoma County jail.

COUNTIES AS TAX COLLECTORS

The California system is to use special districts to perform special services, with the county supervising the work but with the taxpayers of each district paying for the cost of the service. That this is not universally true is shown by the fact that fourteen counties report that they do tax collecting for municipalities; eleven counties perform health service for cities; seven counties do assessing for municipalities; and two counties rent their jails to cities, maintain the roads of cities, or give library service to cities within the county. Other instances of county service extended to municipalities include the giving of civil service examinations, building inspection, and the furnishing of life guards. In one instance it was reported that a county treasurer acts as a city treasurer for the county seat city.

Some of the counties report that some functional rearrangements are now under consideration. These include: Napa County, establishment of a full time health program; Plumas County, combination of the office of treasurer and tax collector;

Plumas County, road administration to be taken from the supervisors and placed under a road commissioner; San Luis Obispo County, combination of purchasing agent and county statistician; San Mateo County, establishment of a county utilities district; Los Angeles County, incorporation of the office of chief administrative officer in the charter.

A summary of the movement for integration and consolidation in California counties during the last year follows:

Basic changes in county organization	2
Consolidations of county functions ..	9
Total of existing consolidations of functions	101
Separations of county functions ..	4
Coöperative arrangements between counties	8
Operation of services for other counties	2
County services performed by counties for cities	42
Changes under consideration	7

Although the initial impetus for further consolidation of county functions may have arisen from the depression, it is now evident that it will continue because of the study and the efforts of groups interested in good government. What the final result will be is, of course, in the hands of the electorate.

Akron's New Merit System: Case History

By ROY V. SHERMAN
University of Akron

Strengthening of personnel provisions brings new lifeblood to municipal civil service; public opinion awakening to value of merit system.

IN NOVEMBER 1937, the home rule charter of the city of Akron was amended to strengthen the merit system. The main objectives of the amendment were to increase the independence of the Civil Service Commission, to provide for an expert to administer the merit system, and to specifically provide more complete personnel procedure and techniques.

Before the amendment the merit system was in the hands of three civil service commissioners appointed by the Mayor for six-year overlapping terms. Since, however, the Mayor could and did control the commission by dismissal of members of the board or by appointment to more lucrative positions, there was a desire on the part of those who supported the merit system to make the commission more independent of the city's chief executive.

The amendment therefore limited the appointing power of the Mayor by restricting his choice to three nominees made by an independent nominating committee. This committee consists of the president of Akron University, the superintendent of schools of the city of Akron, and the presiding judge of the Common Pleas Court of Summit County. The Mayor must with the approval of council appoint one of these nom-

inees to fill a vacancy. In case of more than one vacancy the nominating committee submits a separate list of three to fill each. There is no provision for a deadlock between the Mayor and the council. Since the nominating committee includes three prominent persons well acquainted with the community and representing three important institutions of the community, however, serious difficulties probably will not be encountered.

An attempt is made to divorce the commission from politics by providing that no member shall hold any other public office or public employment and no member shall be a candidate for any elective public office. Except as a general statement of policy which might be amplified by public opinion, these restrictions amount to little. There is nothing to prevent a commissioner using his office for political capital and then resigning when he files his petition for an elective office. Furthermore, there is nothing to prevent a commissioner from taking an active part in a political campaign even for a candidate for Mayor.

The amendment makes it more difficult for the Mayor to control the commission by removing the commissioners. It is specifically provided

that the mayor may "remove any commissioner for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office . . . after a public hearing before council . . . ; provided that two-thirds of the members of council concur."

Under the provisions of this amendment the old Civil Service Commission continued in office. The term of one member expired January 1, 1938. The nominating committee included the retiring commissioner in the list of three, even though he had actively participated in the campaign for the successful candidate for Mayor. He was promptly re-appointed. In spite of this fact, the commission has functioned very satisfactorily during its first year under the amendment.

DIRECTOR CHOSEN BY MERIT

The first action of the Civil Service Commission was to select a personnel director in accordance with the provisions of the amendment. Applications were received from all over the country. These were weeded down to about a half dozen candidates, both local and non-resident. These candidates were called in for personal interviews before the commission and a few citizens who were particularly interested in the success of the merit system. The successful candidate was Charles F. Bassett, personnel director at Flint, Michigan. He assumed his duties February 1, 1938, under a one-year contract. The half-time clerk and stenographer of the old commission continued as the full-time personnel clerk. Examinations were given for the position of junior personnel examiner. His appointment completed the department's staff.

The budget at the disposal of the personnel director is fixed at a minimum of seven dollars per employee in the service of the city. For 1938 this amounted to about \$9,800.

The jurisdiction of the personnel department extends to all employees of the city except officers elected by the people, the directors of the departments of public service, finance, and law, the members of all appointed boards and commissions, and the secretary to the Mayor.

Immediately upon the inauguration of the amendment, questions arose as to who were city employees. Did such term include the teaching and administrative staff of the municipal university? Did it include the employees of the Health Department? Did it include the employees of the Municipal Court?

The original section of the charter specifically exempted the staff of the University of Akron from the merit system. The amendment included no mention of its employees. In order to settle the question the Civil Service Commission brought suit in the Common Pleas Court for a declaratory judgment. The defense for the directors of the university pointed out conflicts with state law, inconsistencies in the city charter amendment, and conflict with the trust agreement.

The state law governing municipal universities provides that the control of such a university "shall be vested in and exercised by a board of directors consisting of nine electors of the municipal corporation" appointed by the Mayor (*General Code* 4001); and that they "shall serve without compensation and shall have

all the powers and perform all the duties conferred or required by law in the government of such university, and the execution of any trust with respect thereto upon the municipal corporation" (*General Code* 4003). The law further provides that the directors shall appoint the president, secretary, professors, tutors, instructors, agents, and servants of the university and fix their compensation (*General Code* 7902).

These provisions of the law were in effect at the time the city of Akron adopted its home rule charter. In regard to the university the charter followed the state law by providing that "the government, conduct, and control of the municipal university shall be vested in and exercised by a board of directors consisting of nine electors of the municipal corporation. The board shall have all the powers and duties now or hereafter provided for by the state law" (*Charter of the City of Akron, Ohio*, Sections 98-99).

UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES EXCLUDED

Certain absurdities which would arise if the amendment were to apply to the university were also pointed out by counsel. Since the president of the university is a member of the nominating commission for members of the Civil Service Commission, he would have some voice in the selection of the commission and at the same time be subject to it. Furthermore, no person is eligible for appointment to any position under the classified service unless he has been a resident of the city of Akron for one year. Such a restriction would make it impossible to maintain the faculty of a university.

After examining these facts the court concluded that "the municipal university is governed by the general law of Ohio through a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor, and that this Board of Directors is vested with full power to control and manage the University of Akron, and an examination of the several provisions of the amendments to the charter providing for civil service further persuades the court to the conclusion that it was not the intention of the civil service amendment to be applicable to the employees and faculty of the University of Akron."¹

The court went on to say that the state legislature might provide that certain employees could be made subject to the rules and regulations of civil service in Akron. But the state civil service law specifically states that "such employees as are engaged in educational or research duties connected with colleges and universities" (*General Code* 486-8) are in the unclassified service.

The Board of Directors of the university also contended that the city of Akron had no power to impose civil service provisions on the university because it would be a violation of the trust agreement with Buchtel College. One of the provisions of this agreement was "That the government of the institution shall be under the control of a separate Board of Trustees to be chosen and perpetuated by municipal authority in such manner as may be

¹*Aldrich B. Underwood et al. vs. John W. Thomas, Court of Common Pleas No. 124439.*

now or hereafter provided by law, with a provision, however, if the law permit, that fitting representation on the Board of Trustees is assured to the alumni." It was contended that the city of Akron through its electors or the city council could not change these conditions in any particular. Citing *Dartmouth College vs. Woodward*, the court agreed with this contention.

The case was appealed to the District Court of Appeals, which affirmed the decision of the Common Pleas Court. This was considered sufficient to settle the matter.²

A suit was also brought by the Civil Service Commission against the Municipal Court to force its employees under the provisions of the civil service amendment. The issue involved was the conflict of a special state law creating the Municipal Court of Akron and the provisions of the Akron charter. The special law provided that "the chief deputy clerk, cashiers, deputy clerks, stenographers, the bailiff, the bailiff's clerk, and all deputy bailiffs shall hold their office during the pleasure of the appointing power" (*General Code* 1579-542). This is in direct conflict with the charter which would include them in the classified service.

The Common Pleas Court decided the case in favor of the home rule charter. The case was appealed and the decision reversed. The Appellate Court held that since the state law was a valid exercise of the state legislative power, it must take precedence

over the provisions of the municipal charter. Citing previous decisions on the principle, the Appellate Court stated that "if the legislature in the exercise of its constitutional power to enact general or special laws has legislated, the municipality cannot nullify such legislation."³

The question of the application of the charter amendment to the employees of the Health Department was originally decided on the strength of an opinion of the Attorney General of the state. The Attorney General ruled that an employee of the Health Department was not a municipal employee but an employee of the Health District of Akron which made him ineligible as a trustee of the municipal employees' retirement system.

Several months later certain of the employees of the Health Department brought suit against the Civil Service Commission to be included in the merit system. The court held that the state law on health took precedence over the city charter. Since there was a conflict with the state law it was ruled that the charter could not extend the merit system to the employees of the Health Department.

NEW CLASSIFICATIONS

Most of the work of the personnel director since his inauguration has been to classify the positions under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission and to give examinations for the positions which were not

²*Underwood et al vs. Thomas et al, Court of Appeals, Ninth Judicial District No. 3069. Jl. 25, 1938.*

³*Aldrich B. Underwood et al versus Donovan D. Isham, Judge of Municipal Court et al, Ninth Judicial District No. 3112. Jan. 23, 1939.*

blanketed in the service. The classification was completed and adopted by the commission about the first of this year.

All of the employees under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission were classified into six services—clerical, administrative and fiscal; engineering and allied; police and fire; skilled workers and labor; operating; maintenance and custodial—66 series, and 221 classifications.

A detailed analysis of the minimum educational requirements is shown in the following figures. The engineering and allied services have the highest educational requirements with 77 per cent of the classes requiring university training and all requiring at least graduation from high school. The clerical, administrative, and fiscal service stands next with 98 per cent of the classes requiring at least high school training. Eighty-seven per cent of the police and fire service classes require at least graduation from high school. This would be higher were it not for the fact that certain positions that could be filled by others are filled by policemen and firemen. Ninety-four per cent of the classes with educational requirements below high school are in the labor, operating, and maintenance and custodial services; while 85 per cent of the classes requiring more than high school are found in the clerical, administrative and fiscal, and engineering and allied services.

In many of the classifications a higher education is stated as preferable. In fact, if one is to have much of an opportunity for promotion, he must have a higher education than

the minimum in order to be selected.

From the point of view of a social science professor it is gratifying to note that several classes require courses in administration, sociology, economics, business administration, and allied subjects. With a municipal university in the city such requirements can easily be met by any competent person desiring to secure such positions.

Placing under the merit system those employees who had been in the civil service less than three years has been one of the major tasks of the personnel department. At the time this work was surveyed, with the task practically complete, twenty-eight examinations for twenty-nine classifications involving 164 positions had been given. Twenty-eight per cent of the incumbents failed the examination; 8 per cent were too low on the eligible list to be certified. Thus in all, 36 per cent of the incumbents failed to keep their jobs. Some 44 per cent of these, however, were reduced to common labor or other positions for which they could qualify.

MONEY SAVED

One rather interesting fact about the fifty-nine positions whose incumbents lost their jobs was that the administration left one-third of them vacant. The salaries of these nineteen positions amounted to \$29,800. The entire cost of the personnel office is only \$9,000.

The Probst system of rating employees has just been introduced for the entire civil service under the merit system. It is too early to draw

conclusions but first results indicate that it will make considerable improvement in the morale and efficiency of employees.

Probably the most serious clash between the Civil Service Commission and the administration occurred when this year's salary ordinance came before city council. The ordinance completely ignored position classification. In several instances more was paid for positions in lower grades than those in higher grades. A position of acting detective was created which did not exist in the classification made by the Civil Service Commission. The personnel director appeared before the council and warned it that he considered the ordinance illegal and threatened to stop the payroll. Later a joint meeting was held between representatives of the council and the commission and an understanding seemed to have

been reached. However, council has stalled all summer. By exercising extreme patience it is probable that a compromise will soon be reached which will recognize the salary classification. The personnel director is now drafting rules and regulations for administering the classification which supposedly will be accepted by council. It is expected that this matter will be settled without court action before the next budget comes up for discussion this fall.

If the Civil Service Commission makes a satisfactory settlement of this controversy, merit in Akron municipal service will have made its greatest advance in the history of the city. Public opinion appears to be awakening gradually to the value of a merit system. Those who support higher standards in public service are optimistic for the future.

Manager Plan in a New England Town

By MARGARET LIPPIATT, *Yale University*

After eighteen years of manager government, Stratford, Connecticut, finds itself satisfied with conduct of municipal affairs on business basis; reduced debt load eases tax burden.

STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT, celebrates this year its three hundredth birthday. The year 1939 marks also the eighteenth anniversary of Stratford's change from the nearly three-century-old town-meeting form of government to a modern council-manager system.

The change in 1921 from traditional methods came about partly because government by a board of selectmen had become farcical and partly because such a shift was politically advantageous to the dominant party. Because that same party has found political satisfaction in it and because the results have been adequate though not spectacular, the new plan has survived.

Stratford is a rapidly growing community. Until the beginning of this century, its population rarely passed the 5,000 mark and in the year 1840 sank to 1,808. By 1921 the population was almost 13,000 and now is estimated at 24,000.

Traditionally the chief occupation of the inhabitants was farming. At the turn of the century Stratford began to receive her share of the great influx of immigrants and now only about 40 per cent of the population are native Americans. More and more the town became an industrial community as new factories were constructed, especially in the neigh-

boring city of Bridgeport. In 1921 the little old New England village was being transformed into a dormitory town for an industrial region.

The New England town-meeting form of government is unsuited to a rapidly growing community. Originally the entire slate of local officials was elected annually at a meeting of the assembled citizenry. These officials usually were amateurs, unskilled in finance or administration, though they included the selectmen, the board of finance, the treasurer, the auditor, the assessor, the collector of taxes, the board of relief, the town clerk, and many others. Election procedure was modified, as towns grew in size, to allow for party caucuses or primaries and for vote by ballot at the polls.

When the total electorate could assemble in one hall, the personal participation of every freeman in the discussion of current issues and in the election could provide the needed check upon the actions of their amateur officers. But when the community became too large for this it was not long before a town official, in order to maintain his security, must let himself be the pawn of the local political boss.

This had happened in Stratford when the last first selectman, the chief member of the administration,

was nothing more than a teamster, not too successful in his business, but a jolly, amiable fellow, worth his salary perhaps to the Republican town committee but not to the town itself.

Finance was handled in the most casual fashion. While there was by 1913 a competent board of finance elected to prepare an appropriation estimate and tax rate, this elementary budget had to be submitted for final action to the uninformed judgment of the electorate, which often changed not only the tax rate but the total upon which the tax was to be levied; accounts were sometimes kept on nothing more systematic than a paper bag; auditing amounted to little more than the nod of assent of an untrained, popularly elected officer; in 1921 bills amounting to \$1,250 had been paid twice and \$30,000's worth had never been paid at all.

Meanwhile public demands increased with even greater rapidity than population. The automobile had come into extensive use and better roads were needed; industries were being managed on an efficiency basis and progressive citizens proclaimed a need for a similar program for their town government. Stratford's governmental equipment scarcely seemed adequate to the task of bringing the town up to date.

Aided by considerations such as these, a citizens' "committee of one hundred" was able to secure the passage in the Connecticut General Assembly and the ratification in Stratford of a special act chartering a fairly typical manager form of government and making Stratford one

of the three council-manager municipalities in Connecticut.

LOW PER CAPITA WEALTH

A distressing lack of taxable property and a simultaneous need for elementary changes are two factors which prevent the display of anything dramatic in Stratford as a result of the manager form of government. Stratford is unhappily cursed by a low per capita wealth. The phenomenal growth of population has occurred for the most part in the lower economic brackets; there has been little aid from the taxation of valuable industrial plants since most, though not all, of the prosperous factories are in Bridgeport (notable exceptions are the Sikorsky factory, which has brought a large number of Russians to Stratford, and the Raybestos plant); there are only 247 homes of over \$10,000 valuation. Consequently the taxable resources upon which Stratford can draw are extremely limited and the tax rate must be proportionally high. No matter what economies may be effected, new, vitally necessary projects have been accumulating since long before 1921—schools, roads, and public buildings, projects which must be carried out to meet the demands of a growing population and of wants at once more sophisticated and more numerous.

Nevertheless, citizens of Stratford are in general content with the "business basis" upon which the manager is now conducting the town's affairs and it is in this that the manager himself takes pride.

In spite of the town's inability drastically to reduce taxes and total

debt, its greatest strides have been in finance. The first manager began the work of reconstituting the financial structure of the town when he installed a new accounting system. A coördinated, appointive finance department was formed to replace the five elective financial officers of the previous system. At the same time the council, which performed the combined financial functions of the previous board of finance, and the electorate became increasingly conscious of the necessity of keeping local expenditures at a minimum and of reducing both long-term and short-term debts.

NO DEFICIT

Before 1921 an annual deficit was quite to be expected; since the change to the manager plan there has been a surplus every year except 1932 when a tremendous relief burden caused a deficit of \$96,879 from a budget of just over one million dollars; the following year there was a surplus of \$7,065 and a decreased bonded indebtedness. One reason that these annual surpluses have been possible is that in making estimates of receipts the finance officer chooses as a basis for calculation a low rather than a high percentage of tax collection.

The tax rate reached peaks in 1935 and 1937 but has begun to decrease again. For 1939 it is 28 mills, a rate higher than those of most other towns of similar size in Fairfield County, but the lowest in Stratford in thirteen years. The council chairman states that 20 mills should be the usual rate, but that

because of the combined handicaps of depression, local needs, and low per capita wealth this rate has been exceeded every year, except two, since 1919.

While the current record is not striking it indicates that Stratford is being run on a forward, not a losing, basis. Moody's gives the town an "A" rating. The council adopted in 1933 the policy of incurring no short-term debts. Likewise the council has been eager to reduce each year the bonded indebtedness by paying off more bonds than it issues. The reduction has perforce not been steady. Good use was made during the depression, however, of low interest rates and federal relief in acquiring funds for the building of an addition to the high school and a modern and charmingly designed town hall. Most of the major construction in recent years, including a new school and improvements in roads, drainage systems, and parks, has been done by relief labor.

Fields other than financial administration have been less formalized. In purchasing, for example, a simple and "common sense" procedure is employed by the manager, who is assisted here by one of the officers of the finance department. For personnel selection the council has provided, at the request of the present manager, civil service examinations and general standards of age, height, and weight for the fire and police departments. But after the results of the examination have been ascertained it is the manager who selects the new fireman or policeman. For the recruitment of administrative

employees, of whom there are only sixty-eight, the manager may require the performance of some specific task, but the criterion is the suitability of the candidate in the manager's own opinion.

MANAGERS' TALENTS VARY

The character of each of the five administrations since 1921 has been determined by each manager's special interest or talent and by the intensity of his dominance over the council—the degree to which he has adhered to the council's policy that the council is the board of directors, the manager simply the foreman. In the same way the leadership exercised by the council chairman, who is elected as such by the council, has varied. The first four managers endeavored to make their leadership felt; only the fifth has lived up to the standards set by the theorists of council-manager government.

The first four were variously received by the public; of these only the fourth was truly liked and that largely because, while maintaining more courtesy and tact than his sometimes more domineering predecessors, he had "ideas"—ideas for the reduction of the number of pupils per school room, for the beautification of Stratford, for the carrying out of the town plan. But such a man could only be dubbed an idealist by a conservative council, most of them New Englanders, bred in economy, bent on the necessity of reducing town expenditures to the bone.

The present, or fifth, manager is heartily approved by the council because he does not attempt anything

spectacular, because he is most interested in keeping the town running economically on a business basis, and because he takes orders. In fact, it was after years of observing that only this sympathetic sort of obedience could insure a manager's tenure, that the present manager took his office. Some say that he is too much at the mercy of the council and its lively chairman. It is for this that the townspeople are most likely to criticize him while it is for "ideas" and vision that they still praise the former manager. Nevertheless, most citizens of Stratford agree that the present manager is the best so far.

Whatever the particular temperament of each manager, each has contributed something to the modernization of the community. The first installed the beginnings of the present accounting system and gave, however tactlessly, of his experience as manager in other towns. The second, a graduate student of local government, drafted with the assistance of the town attorney (now Governor of Connecticut) the first zoning law for the town. The third, an engineer and little else, built or repaired many miles of road; for this the fire department is especially grateful. The fourth quite successfully carried the burden of town relief and succeeded in obtaining a town plan which is now kept up to date by the engineering division in spite of the waning of the interest of the town council. The fifth, for his work since 1923 in the department of finance and for his continued leadership as manager-director of finance, a leadership sympathetic to

the sentiment of the council, must be given most credit for the stabilization of financial procedure.

POLITICS AND GRAFT

Politics have not been abolished in Stratford though graft has been virtually eliminated. In a previous administration there was such staunch managerial opposition to "politics" in relief that some appointments apparently were made solely to oppose, but one also hears gossip of relief assignments to persons already amply supported. Of any such shady implication the present administration seems to be free. As an example, the councilmen have transferred their annual assignment of new street lights to the manager in order to prevent political rivalries; on the other hand the number of members of certain council-appointed boards has been adjusted from time to time so that each councilman will have an equal number of appointments to make.

Politics still exist in town government. The council chairman says, "It's all politics," and it always has been. The charter itself was introduced in 1921, it is said, by the long-entrenched Republican party in order to save their control of the town offices. On the one hand, it was feared that the voters were tired of the Republican nominee for first selectman and would favor the Democrats. On the other hand, the financial state of the town was chaotic. A subcommittee of the Republican town committee was delegated to submit proposals for financial improvement. What they did submit was a totally new plan of govern-

ment. The subcommittee was promptly "spanked" and forced to withdraw.

Under the direction of one of its members, however, the treasurer of the Republican town committee, a more or less independent movement was started in support of the new plan. The new plan recommended itself even to the conservative Republicans as a means of retaining their political control in the face of an imminent shift to the Democrats. Consequently, when there arose a citizens' "committee of one hundred," composed of outstanding Republicans with a few Democrats enlisted to give it a nonpartisan appearance, the "Old Guard" put up only a semblance of a fight. Their protests were sometimes vehement but were completely unorganized. As a result, and with a few concessions such as one providing for district-elected councilmen, the new plan won the day quite easily and the Republican control of the town continued not only among the proponents of the manager plan but also among the Old Guard.

The leading Republicans who had been the chief politicians of the town immediately found seats in the new council and some are still active. In the first council the Old Guard opposition had a two-thirds majority of the nine members. This was in spite of a "nonpartisan" ballot. These were the officials, incidentally, who were subjected to recall proceedings when the scandal of the council's treatment of the first manager came to light.¹ Perhaps they

¹See Richard S. Childs, "Three Town

had hoped to wreck the whole plan by trying to ruin the new manager, but instead all but one of them found their own destruction, at least temporarily. Other members of the new council were Republicans who had fought for the new charter; one of these was the first council chairman, who later became town manager. Several years after, the former Republican town committee chairman won a place on the council and tried to retain it for years on a strictly nonpartisan basis, but at last he had to succumb to his more realistic Republican associates and "play ball" in order to claim any sort of consideration for his proposals.

The ballot, according to the charter, was to be nonpartisan, but that too has ceased to be a practical measure. For the first few years a nonpartisan extension of the committee of one hundred, the People's General Committee, supported candidates while others, nominated by petition as required by law, were backed by the various political parties. As time went on the parties more and more frankly "endorsed" candidates, sending out bulletins announcing the party's choice for each district and offering the customary enticements to bring out the vote. The absence of party names from the ballot remains the only indication of nonpartisan election.

For several years the nonpartisan committee of one hundred wisely continued its work of defense and support in the People's General Com-

mittee, but as it grew more and more exclusively Republican, it lacked incentive to work; it became only another adjunct of the town committee and died from lack of competition. Similarly the District Improvement Societies have expired or become attached in most cases to the Republican district committees. Unfortunately these civic associations aiming to support the charter have died out and with them all effective opposition to party politics in town government. So far as the defense of the charter itself is concerned there is little need for agitation; no serious attempt has been made to abrogate it either by citizens or by council.

In every case the Stratford councilman is a Mr. Average Man with his own business; politics is for him a hobby. He has just enough offices in boards and committees at his disposal so that he is satisfied with his present opportunities. Given less, he would have no incentive and little reward.

Stratford's politics are still run by amateurs. Most of them are proud of their American heritage, for in spite of the predominantly foreign population there have been few councilmen of foreign background. They are eager to preserve a conservative, average, American type of government. But administration has become professional. Finance has been stabilized, improvements have been made, the long sought "business" basis has been achieved. Nothing spectacular has occurred, but if Stratford's government is at all static, it is static on the modern level.

Contributors in Review

FEW in the state of Pennsylvania should be better equipped either to propose or to carry out local governmental Utopias than **H. F. Alderfer** (*Design for Pennsylvania Localities*), who holds three jobs, all of them intimately associated with Pennsylvania local government. He is executive secretary of the Institute of Local Government of Pennsylvania State College, secretary of the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, and director of publications of the League of Cities of the Third Class in Pennsylvania. A final Pennsylvania affiliation is co-authorship of a book called *Pennsylvania State and Local Government*. Mr. Alderfer was born and brought up in Pennsylvania.

TRIPLE use has thus far been made of **Margaret Lippiatt's** (*Manager Plan in a New England Town*) research on government in Stratford, Connecticut. The Social Science Research Council has used it as one of the contributory studies in the nationwide survey of council-manager governments during 1938 and Yale University gave Miss Lippiatt a master's degree on the strength of it. A native Californian, Miss Lippiatt came to Yale by way of Mount Holyoke College, '36. She is now research assistant at New Haven in the Department of Government.

AS CONTRIBUTING editor on council-manager government to the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, **Miriam Roher** (*A Taft in City Hall*) has visited numerous manager cities and interviewed all forms of citizendom and officialdom, from peanut vendors with political views to city managers and councilmen. Some of the results of her researches have appeared from time to time during the past two years in articles in the REVIEW. Miss Roher has also done research and writing on varied governmental topics, chief among them being public welfare, in her capacity of staff member during National Municipal League Consultant Service surveys of Bar Harbor, Maine, and White Plains, New York.

SINCE 1927 **Harry F. Scoville** (*Thrift via County Consolidation*) has been officially connected with Los Angeles County, successively as efficiency engineer, director of the Los Angeles County Bureau of Efficiency, director of the County Department of Budget and Research, and now as director of the Bureau of Administrative Research. Once he was a city manager, and became president of the California City Managers' Association. He has also been a city planner, a teacher of county government in the Civic Center School of the University of Southern California, and president of the Western Governmental Research Association. Missouri was Mr. Scoville's birthplace.

A PROFESSOR who practices political science as well as preaching it is **Roy V. Sherman** (*Akron's New Merit System: Case History*), head of the political science department of the University of Akron. While teaching at the Universities of Kentucky and Akron, Professor Sherman simultaneously assisted in organizing the Kentucky League of Municipalities, participated in the campaign for city manager government for Lexington, took part in several local reform campaigns in Ohio, directed the Akron police school and led an Akron civic forum. He has published articles based on his experiences in the *American City*, *Public Management*, and the *American Political Science Review*.

(Continued on Page 733)

Reflections on Governmental Research

By WILLIAM E. MOSHER

*Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University*

"It is our belief that each community in the country should have a well qualified agency interested in resolving the conflict between those who would spend and those who have to pay."

THE annual conference of the Governmental Research Association, which took place early in September at Princeton, New Jersey, canvassed in a systematic way the functions of the governmental research movement. The discussion gave rise to the reflections which are brought together in this paper.

It was recognized that governmental research is carried on by a variety of agencies, such, for example, as governmental departments on all levels, by national associations of governmental officials, by bureaus of research, by taxpayers associations, and occasionally by civic reform organizations. Lately an undue emphasis seems to have been given to the research function of the Governmental Research Association, which consists in the main of men and women associated with bureaus of governmental research and taxpayers associations.

Two basic ideas that have been somewhat neglected stand out as a result of the conference as far as these last named types of organization are concerned. The one is that research is simply one of several tools used by these organizations, the other that citizen support is a distinguishing feature of bureaus of governmental research and taxpayers organizations. These considerations lead to the proposal that in the future the Governmental Research Association should consist of citizen-supported agencies and their staffs. It was agreed that they have so many policies and problems in common that this limitation on membership is called for.

In canvassing the functions of citizen-supported agencies it became clear that one

fundamental function is the application and interpretation of facts as the basis for improving government, such application being directed toward two objectives. Broadly speaking, one objective is the development of better methods of administration and all that this entails among public officials themselves. The other is the development of public opinion among the citizenry in the interest of improving the character of government.

The success of a research organization will then depend upon investigation, compilation, and interpretation of facts looking toward the education either of the bureaucracy or of the citizenry or both.

As far as the bureaucracy is concerned, it must be recognized that those administering the governments of cities and states of the country fall far short, in the procedures and processes of management, of the standards which have met the approval of experience. Despite the imposing advances that have been made by the national organizations of public officials in the science and art of administration, the critic might without much difficulty prove that in a majority of public jurisdictions the officials concerned have not taken advantage of the best practices and standards that are available.

It is at this point that the research bureaus and taxpayers associations may perform a significant function. They have the opportunity to interpret and apply available knowledge to the local scene with which they are associated. This means the gathering of data bearing upon one or another procedure, the compilation of comparable data from other sources, the

use of comparative statistics, and the reference to accepted best practices or standards.

By this means the research agency can become an ally of the professional association. Under some circumstances it can establish its own case with respect to one or another matter, that is, where the professional association may not have taken a stand. In this latter situation the staff of the research agency becomes not an adapter but an inventor.

Creation of Public Opinion

One of the most generally accepted truths in the field of public administration is that no government can advance faster than public opinion permits and approves. In this connection the educational function of the research agency is directed toward the more intelligent members of the local citizenry. Here it will make use of the devices well known to the publicist, as for example popular bulletins, newspaper articles, public meetings and conferences.

Some bureaus have been particularly successful in stirring up public opinion by such means. Obviously a progressive attitude on the part of the public will give stimulus to a progressive attitude on the part of the officials. At the same time a too progressive attitude on the part of the latter may be handicapped by indifference or prejudices on the part of the former. It is unwholesome if either group is out of step with the other. As no other organization, the bureau of research is qualified to see to it that citizenry and officialdom are in step, each aiming at the progressive improvement of the government with which both are identified.

The citizen-supported group has a general and over-all responsibility which it alone is capable of fulfilling. That is the balancing in an impartial way of the interests of all. Under a proper setup its staff will give due weight to the desires of the officials who are and should be continuously interested in improving and expanding services to the desires of special

interest groups, as, for example, those who would extend the probationary system, the health program, recreational facilities, and the like, and finally to the desires of the taxpayers who are disturbed at the mounting costs of operating government.

The dominant purpose of citizen-supported agencies is the welfare of the public as a whole. It is called upon to make factual studies with regard to one or another matter and on the basis of its results to bring its influence to bear in the interest of all concerned. Even the legislative body, which presumably is representative of all citizens, is, as is well known, strongly influenced by pressure groups and partisan considerations. As a matter of fact, there is no competent agency within a community that is in any way comparable to a well organized and well balanced bureau of research or taxpayers association.

Unfortunately, there are not a few taxpayers associations which do not belong in this category. Their outstanding objective is to reduce taxes and obtain cuts quite regardless of the damaging effects to the services which may be affected, some of which may be actually essential to the well-being of the community. Such organizations have become and may become in the future nothing more nor less than a menace to the commonweal.

It is probably true that in almost any jurisdiction savings may be brought about which will lead to a reduction of taxes through the adoption of better governmental structures, of more up-to-date procedures, and a more competent official leadership within the boundaries of a bureaucracy. It is the proper function of the citizen-supported agencies to prepare the way for improvements along these lines and thus to bring about the desired economies.

Some taxpayers associations are not manned and not designed to attain these results. It will not be disputed that there has been a boom in the establishment of

taxpayers associations in these recent years. They respond to an obvious and proper need of relief, but if their influence on legislative bodies and appropriation committees is not wisely directed, experience shows that it can work havoc. Examples are plentiful illustrating the ease with which those promoting taxpayers organizations can secure a membership and can stir up that membership to bring an irresistible influence to bear on appropriating bodies. This step calls for little skill and only an inconsiderable amount of intelligence, whereas both skill and intelligence of a relatively high order are called for if the power of protesting taxpayers groups is in the long run to work good rather than harm.

Citizen Groups Needed

In accordance with the analysis above, citizen-supported agencies are called upon to play the role of brokers in a market characterized by conflicting interests and tendencies. These agencies should establish and hold in balance the conflict of interests, approaching the problem objectively, impartially, and with understanding as to what action will best serve the interests of all groups affected by whatever decisions may be made.

There has perhaps never been a time

when citizen-supported organizations of the type described above have had a more important role to play than just now. On the one hand government, both in its organization and its services, is becoming more and more complex and technical. It must, therefore, be interpreted to the general public by those who are endowed with special competency.

Furthermore, because of the unprofessional character both in the selection and training of vast numbers of public officials in important positions, competent interpreters of progressive measures are required at this point also. On the other hand, government is becoming more and more expensive. It is absorbing an increasing amount of the national income year by year. As services expand the tax burden will rise even more. These circumstances point to the need of economy and efficiency as never before.

The phrase, economy and efficiency, was first coined by the bureau movement and has been its lode-star ever since. It is our belief that each community in the country should have a well qualified agency interested in resolving the conflict between those who would spend and those who have to pay, resolving it on the basis of careful and impartial analysis of facts to the end that all may be well served.

The Researcher's Digest: October

New public administration organization and new research association to grow out of September GRA conference; Des Moines Bureau lists eighteen years' accomplishments; Western directory published.

TWO governmental research organizations will grow out of the **Governmental Research Association** as a result of proposals made at the twenty-eighth annual conference of the Association at Princeton, New Jersey, September 6th to 9th.

A public administration research association, to be composed of administrators and those university groups interested in the training of administrators, was inaugurated at a dinner meeting by Charles A. Beard, based upon the original proposal advanced by Luther Gulick of the Institute of Public Administration.

The second new group will be limited to staff members of bureaus of governmental research and others directly engaged in citizen-supported activity designed to do research on and influence the administration of local government. Lent D. Upson of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research proposed this latter organization. Dean William E. Mosher of Syracuse discusses its aims on page 725 of this magazine.

After October 1st, it was announced, the quarters of the GRA will be moved from Chicago, to be housed temporarily in the offices of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research.

Considered one of the most successful meetings of the GRA ever held, the twenty-eighth conference devoted fully half its sessions to discussion of the fundamental aims and techniques of governmental research. Proceedings of the conference will be published by the Governmental Research Association in the near future.

Des Moines Points with Pride

Directly related to the Princeton discussions of the functions of a research

bureau is a forty-two item list of the chief accomplishments of the **Des Moines Bureau** since its organization in 1922 which has just been released by the Bureau. As a case example, the list merits reproduction in full. Perhaps just as revealing might be a supplementary list, to be used side by side with this one, detailing the methods used to secure each accomplishment. The report follows:

The Des Moines city and school per capita costs are less than the average for twenty-one cities of its population group—also less than the per capita cost ten years ago.

The Des Moines city and school bonded debt is lower than it was ten years ago despite the many city work relief bonds which have been issued in recent years.

In thirteen years the bureau has saved Des Moines' taxpayers over \$5,000,000 in needless bond issues prevented and public expense items cut.

The work of this Bureau is all done by two paid employees, the secretary and stenographer, directed by the president, who passes on reports and recommendations. Frequent legal assistance is also required.

1. Helped send four city payroll payers to jail (1922-23). This has saved many thousands of dollars since by deterring graft.

2. Secured legislation combining city and county hospitals (1925).

3. Helped draft first state budget (1925).

4. Induced Polk County Hospital Board to defer the building of expensive new general and contagious hospitals costing half a million dollars (1927). Saves about \$25,000 in added yearly overhead expense.

5. Drafted and secured passage of law providing for system of permanent registration of voters for elections (1927). Saves \$10,000 biennially.

6. Drafted and secured passage of law providing for biennial instead of annual school elections (1927). Saves \$3,000 every two years.

7. Drafted and secured passage of acts abolishing fees and perquisites in offices of county sheriff and county attorney for liquor cases, feeding prisoners, and auto mileage (1927-1933). These items, which cost \$74,000 in 1926, were cut to \$28,000 six years later.
8. Made survey of city and county bonded debts and laid out plan for amortization (1928-1930). This plan has resulted in saving several hundred thousand dollars interest in future debt charges.
9. Drafted and secured passage of county budget act which places county offices on budget basis and saves thousands yearly (1929).
10. Won case in Supreme Court blocking insane fee grab by clerks of court (1929). Saves \$2,000 yearly.
11. Suggested purchase of photostat equipment in county recorder's office (1929). Saves about \$2,000 yearly.
12. Investigated county purchasing procedure and secured passage of resolution requiring competitive bids on most county purchases (1929). Saves thousands of dollars yearly.
13. Found county voting machines were overinsured by \$40,000 and county employees were receiving premiums (1930). County went on co-insurance basis, obtained refunds, and reduced insurance carried.
14. Persuaded officials to take competitive bids on election printing supplies for county and city, which saves \$2,000 every two years (1931).
15. Drafted law which passed in 1931, providing that proceeds from moneys and credits 5-mill tax levy should offset an equal amount of property taxes. This saves about 1½ mills yearly.
16. Made report showing it is against best interests of city ever to annex Valley Junction (1931).
17. Drafted and secured passage of law providing for biennial instead of annual census of school children (1931).
18. Investigated poor fund for grand jury; made report to jury which resulted in savings of many thousands of dollars in meat and other food costs (1932-1933).
19. Bureau helped in creation of 1931 Committee on Reduction in Governmental Expenditures which presented legislative program of seventy-five bills (forty-two of which were passed), saving millions of dollars a year in entire state (1933).
20. Bureau contributed materially to the passage of, and at one point saved, the Beatty-Bennett bill, which cut tax levies on Des Moines property nearly a million dollars a year under the 1931 peak (1933).
21. Drafted and secured passage of law forbidding public officers from collecting witness fees while on duty (1933). Saves \$1,000 a year.
22. Drafted law providing for quadrennial instead of biennial real estate assessment which saves \$10,000 biennially in assessing expense (1933).
23. Drafted law changing method of computing taxation on assessed values of property from one-quarter to full value. This vastly simplifies tax levying and assessing procedure in this state and therefore saves money in preparing tax and assessment records (1933).
24. Passage of law in 1934 to last two years, providing for payment of outstanding warrants at end of year by delinquent tax collections instead of by issuing bonds. This prevented city bond issues for deficits of \$240,000 in 1933 and \$167,000 in 1934. Big saving in interest on bond issues, which otherwise would have been necessary (1934).
25. Drafted and secured passage of new firemen's and policemen's pension law which decreases taxpayers' contributions toward pensions for new firemen and policemen from 93 per cent to 60 per cent (1934).
26. Secured adoption of revision in city's monthly financial reports which reveals true condition of city funds and brings to public attention any growing deficits (1934).
27. Started agitation and helped in passage of new delinquent tax collection law abolishing scavenger sales. This law has since brought in about \$1,000,000 in back taxes (1935).
28. Bureau won Supreme Court decision in miracle budget injunction. This prevented another threatened \$50,000 overestimation of office receipts in 1936 city budget. Decision also condemned practice of incurring deficit by overestimation of office receipts (1936).
29. Discovered an unnecessary levy of about \$60,000 in one city bond fund in 1936, which permitted an equal saving in taxes in 1937.
30. Organized a small speakers' bureau in 1937, which supplied civic organizations

with speakers on problems of local government.

31. Drafted and secured passage of bill which confines annual city expenditures to 95 per cent of the tax levy and forbids an overestimate of receipts other than taxes (1937). This should stop annual city deficits.

32. Bureau shared with city employees and several other organizations the credit for enacting the new municipal civil service bill which, among other improvements, eliminates the old evil of prolonged temporary appointments without examinations (1937).

33. By its disclosure regarding the inequitable "district discounts" granted by the city assessor in the 1937 real estate assessment, and by showing that the majority of assessed local values were higher than the average in other cities of the state, the Bureau provided convincing evidence of the injustice of the 1937 real estate assessment which induced the city council to cut \$14,000,000 from the real estate valuations originally made by the city assessor (1937).

34. Bureau shared with the Des Moines Real Estate Board the work which resulted in the order by the State Appeal Board cutting the proposed 1938 Des Moines school tax levy by \$100,000, and the city of Des Moines tax levy by \$323,000 (1937).

35. Opposed arbitrary appointment by city council of new fire chief without competitive examination. Stiff civil service examination was held and qualified man selected (1937).

36. Bureau provided most of the statistical data used in the city manager plan campaign in the winter of 1937-1938, which, while unsuccessful in putting over the plan, raised the chief issues which paved the way for the election of a new city council which has pursued a policy of economy and efficiency (1937-1938).

37. Opposed building new sewerage disposal plant for many years because city could not afford it—then when federal aid was available, urged its construction as work relief project (1937-1939). PWA and WPA contributed \$1,900,000 toward \$2,700,000 project which gave huge saving to city.

38. Urged adoption of yearly instead of hourly wage for semi-skilled, year-round city working crews (1938). This improved morale and credit of men; gave city many hours of extra work and dis-

connected city pay rate from yearly boosts of union scale.

39. Wrote most of city job classification report which gives duties and minimum requirements for every city position (1938).

40. Made exhaustive investigation of \$6,500,000 yearly county poor relief setup and pointed out possible economies in poor farm, drug purchases, etc. (1938).

41. Drafted bill which was passed by legislature, permitting city to continue work relief program for two more years, instead of dumping 3,000 WPA workers back on county direct relief (1939). This will save at least \$200,000 a year in county poor relief bonds.

42. Drafted bill for legislature, which was enacted, centralizing control of state motor vehicles under Governor (1939).

Western Index

Names of official and citizen-supported governmental research groups in the western states, a description of their activities and organization, and lists of their periodical publications, studies completed, and studies in process are contained in a directory just published by the Bureau of Public Administration of the University of California for the **Western Governmental Research Association**. A dollar will buy a unique publication of thoroughly cross-indexed vital information, 123 pages long. The book constitutes a new and revised edition of a previous directory prepared by the Bureau of Public Administration in 1935.

Arkansas Bureau Offers In-service Training

The **Bureau of Municipal Research of the University of Arkansas** and the **Arkansas Municipal League** will undertake an extension of municipal employee training services during the coming months, reports Henry A. Ritgerod of the research bureau.

Regional schools for advanced fire training courses for firemen who have qualified in a basic fire training course, given for the last eighteen months under the spon-

ership of League and Bureau, will be opened in various parts of the state in October and November. Approximately eight hundred firemen, both full-time and volunteer, are participating now in this program. Water and sewerage plant superintendents are also to have a series of district schools during the winter months. At present, the training activities for water and sewerage plant employees are limited to an annual short course held at the University of Arkansas each spring. Finally, regional conferences for mayors and aldermen on municipal problems are scheduled for the early months of 1940. These conferences were inaugurated in 1938.

Public service training activities at the state level are also continuing under the sponsorship of the same two organizations, and plans are under way for their extension to additional classes of public employees.

Research Bureau Reports Received

Assessments

The Results of a Hit or Miss Special Assessment Policy. Schenectady Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc. *Bulletin*, August 28, 1939. 4 pp.

Borrowing

City Debt. Schenectady Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc., *Bulletin*, September 12, 1939. 4 pp.

Why the City Must Borrow \$800,000. Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc. *Municipal Research*, August 1939. 1 p.

Cost of City Government

Annual Expense, City of Rochester. Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc. *Municipal Research*, August 1939. 1 p.

Published Budgets Call for Total Expenditure of \$6,738,351.08 and Tax Rate

of \$2.813. Taxpayers Research Association, Fort Wayne, Indiana. *Research Bulletin*, August 1939. 4 pp.

Finance

An Analysis of the \$3,332,581 Deficit in the Municipal Revenue Fund. Governmental Research Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. *Mind Your Business*, September 11, 1939. 7 pp.

Population Trends

Boston Comes of Age. Boston Municipal Research Bureau. *Bulletin*, August 28, 1939. 8 pp.

Research

The Documentation of Public Personnel Administration. Western Governmental Research Association. *Governmental Research Notes*, August 1939. 11 pp.

Governmental Research Organizations in the Western States as of January 1939. Published by Bureau of Public Administration, University of California, for Western Governmental Research Association. 123 pp.

Summary of Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Institute of Government at the University of Washington. July 12, 13, 14, 1939. Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Washington. September 1, 1939. 44 pp.

Public Welfare

Erie County Welfare. Buffalo Municipal Research Bureau, Inc. *Just a Moment*, August 17, 1939. 2 pp.

State Aid

Can State Aid Aid Local Economies? New York State Bureau of Governmental Research. *Bulletin*, September 11, 1939. 4 pp.

Tax Delinquency

Questionable Assets. Schenectady Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc. *Bulletin*, August 16, 1939. 4 pp.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW:

On page 602 of the August 1939 issue of the REVIEW, in his review of *Tax Exemptions* by James W. Martin, *et al.*, is the following from the pen of Dr. Thomas H. Reed:

President Roosevelt's proposal for the reciprocal removal of the exemptions which now protect the securities and salaries of one jurisdiction from the taxation of another is a serious one. It is peculiarly interesting since one of its natural results will be to force wealthy people to invest in productive private enterprise whereas the general policy of the New Deal has been to discourage saving and private investment. The whole matter of the relation of the removal of these exemptions to the New Deal economic philosophy might have been profitably examined.

It strikes the writer that it also may be profitable to examine a facile postulate and assumption which appears garbed as a fact in this statement, particularly in the phrase beginning, "the general policy of the New Deal."

There has been for some years a diminution in the amount of money, over that previously, flowing into the purchase of new capital goods whose title remains in private hands. This situation began long before President Roosevelt was inaugurated. If its causes and reasons are sought, prominent among them are the policies of the administrations which preceded his. These should be properly weighted with responsibility, for it has often happened that just one action, preceding the relinquishment of office, on the part of ignorant or emotionally blinded men may create so much havoc that a generation of reconstruction hardly suffices to repair the damage.

It is always a problem as to how far back the motion picture film of history must be unrolled to shed full light upon the present. A convenient year is 1914. At its beginning the currents of the world's economic life were flowing fairly well. We were habituated to a situation in which one-half the yearly cotton crop, one-third of the cereal crop, direct or as meat, and a small percentage of our industrial products, went elsewhere. Tariffs had been slowly rising but foreigners were able to pay for these exports in the only way one set of nationals can pay another in any real sense—with other goods.

Then war came. The flow out to the Allies and neutrals increased enormously; the rate of flow of our money into capital goods went up in even greater proportion.

Then came the peace of Versailles. Farsighted economists saw then that in order that the Allies pay off their debts, their interest, and rebuild their equipment, we must be prepared to take a very much greater volume of imports than before the war. For Germany to pay any reparations a larger foreign market for her goods was also a necessity. But fear by the owners of our industrial equipment that this would mean a loss of our home market to them became a panic. They controlled the political as well as the economic power. The result was the Smoot-Hawley tariff act. The famous round-robin of the hundred leading economists, which all who accept the Reed postulate should re-read monthly, was treated as a scrap of paper. Then, and not with the inauguration of Roosevelt or his policies, were the forces set at work which had created the situation that no great extension of our capital equipment has been needed since, in the economist's sense of loans solicited wherewith to buy new capital goods.

Since then, nor all the king's horses nor all the king's men, though they be brain-trusters of either major political school, have been quite able to put the Humpty Dumpty of American economic life quite together again. My own feeling is that Henry A. Wallace has done the best long-reach job.

But I. A. Richards has recently repeated, in *Interpretation in Teaching*, the salutary counsel enunciated so well in the twelfth century by John of Salisbury in his *Policraticus*, "Any particular thing has inherent in it as many meanings of other objects as it has likenesses to them, on condition, however, that the more important is never the sign of the less important thing." And there is a way to take Dr. Reed's remark so that it states the truth about the New Deal but not in the way he intends.

It is true that the New Deal has worked so that one effect is to discourage private investment at the rates of interest still felt, by those with large amounts to invest privately, to be normal and just. The New Deal has re-established to some extent the flow of incomes of small size. Small as they are, saving takes place, in spite of Dr. Reed's statement that the New Deal discourages it. It takes the form of insurance premiums. The result is that one company alone is forced to invest one million dollars a day. The amount of funds which must be invested grows ever greater and the low rate of interest that is accepted reduces interest rates in all investment fields. Plotted as a curve we recognize our old friend, the law of diminishing returns. The strike against its implications is seen by the short-sighted as a reaction to the policies of the New Deal. But this fate in our economic drama was seen on the stage by some economic observers before history knew Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, or Hoover, and will be working when school boys studying history have difficulty in keeping the Roosevelt presidents separate.

The only answer to the whole problem involved which does not call for the extinguishment of private enterprise, is not to blame Roosevelt, or to give national control back to that group of woefully ignorant men who, though they now have a brain trust have it as an ornament and not as working tool—the answer is to make money suffer from the disease which all other unused things must suffer from—slow decay.

To those who work in the field of municipal affairs this long time trend towards zero interest implies that the low rates now obtaining tend to be permanent and the load on our taxpayers hereafter will not be as heavy as in the past from that item of the budget.

MARTIN TRIPP

CONTRIBUTORS IN REVIEW

(Continued from Page 724)

SOME Economic Implications of Present United States Population Trends" is the subject of the dissertation **R. Burr Smith** (*Replanning for Depopulation*) is preparing for his doctorate at New York University. A graduate of Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs in 1934, he has just been appointed assistant professor of social sciences at the University of Newark. Previously he taught economics and sociology at New York University's Hofstra College on Long Island. Social science is a tradition in the Smith family, Mr. Smith's father being provost of New York University by way of the Department of Government.

TEN years ago, a NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW article by **Harvey Walker** (*Well Springs of Our Laws*) was seen by publishers, who asked him to write a book on the same subject called *Law-Making in the United States*. If a book results from this article, it would be Professor Walker's fifth, the three others being *Federal Limitations upon the Municipal Ordinance-Making Power*, 1929; *Training Public Employees in Great Britain*, 1935; and *Public Administration in the United States*, 1937. Besides his present position at Ohio State University, Dr. Walker has been a member of the staffs of the Leagues of Municipalities of Kansas and of Minnesota, and was superintendent of the budget of the state of Ohio for two years.

News in Review

City, County, State Progress in Brief

Illinois Voters Seek Referendum on Manager Legislation

Federal relief provisions and Hatch bill react on localities

By H. M. OLMSTED

Three times in the last three years the Illinois General Assembly has refused to pass enabling legislation to permit Chicago and other Illinois cities to adopt the city manager plan and proportional representation.

Each defeat, however, has had the effect of crystallizing public sentiment in favor of the bills. Today, 205 organizations, including such bodies as the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Department of the American Legion, Illinois League of Women Voters, Illinois Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations, and Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, have endorsed the legislation.

It has now been decided to act under a state law providing for referendums on matters of public policy. Petitions have been printed by the Chicago City Manager Committee and are ready for circulation. When approximately 450,000 signatures have been obtained, the petitions will be presented to the Secretary of State who is then directed by statute to place the question on the ballot as follows:

Shall the people of the cities and villages of Illinois be given the right to vote upon the question of adopting or rejecting the city manager plan of municipal government under which the proportional representation method may be used for electing members of city and village councils?

Three results are anticipated from the petition drive: first, mass education

through word of mouth and printed information given out by circulators of the petitions; second, formation of an effective citizen organization of thousands of persons throughout the state united in a common objective; and third, a mandate to the General Assembly to give the people the right to decide for themselves a fundamental question.

The keynote of the referendum campaign was sounded in a radio broadcast over WLS on September 20th. L. E. Leverone, legislative chairman of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Mrs. Laura Lunde, vice president of the Woman's City Club, and H. Barry McCormick, chairman of the Chicago City Manager Committee, participated in the radio discussion, at the conclusion of which Mr. Leverone stated:

Our defense of democracy can begin at no better point than right here at home on this front. . . . We are operating on the conviction that issues can be decided by ballots and not bullets, that our chosen representatives will enact laws which express the will of the majority. Through the medium of the public policy referendum all of us can take part in a democratic process—and make our community a better place in which to live.

ROGER DUNN, *Secretary*
Chicago City Manager Committee

EDITOR'S NOTE.—A questionnaire covering a number of topics is being circulated throughout Chicago by the National Progressive Republican Organization. One of the questions asked is whether the citizens of Chicago should be given an opportunity to vote on the city manager form of government. William Balmer, director of the poll, announced on September 22nd that in the first batch of returns 8,690 out of 9,738, or nearly 90 per cent, favored such an opportunity.

WPA Restrictions Cause Local Relief Problems

Political differences between the administration and Congress and additional experience with relief were responsible for drastic restrictions hastily imposed on the Work Projects (ex-Works Progress) Administration by the last Congress, which appropriated \$1,477,000,000 to provide an average of 2,050,000 jobs during 1939-1940, compared with 3,000,000 in 1938-1939. To some million people on local relief rolls eligible for WPA employment will be added many dismissed workers whom "unforeseen and unpredictable developments" keep from private jobs, so that local relief costs will be increased substantially, unless additional national funds are appropriated.

National contributions now are limited to not more than three-fourths of the total cost of all non-federal projects, approved after January 1, 1940, in any state, although on some projects and in some communities they may be greater. Most of the states will have to contribute more, some substantially more, than they did last year. The largest increases are required in northern industrial states where unemployment is heaviest and high wage rates reduce the ratio of sponsor's contributions to total costs.

Congress curtailed political abuses considerably, but did not approve Colonel Harrington's request to bring the WPA under the merit system. Work relief officials fear that reduced funds for administration coupled with new duties, especially the mandatory periodic review of need, will seriously impair the efficiency of the program.

Aliens still are barred from WPA jobs, and preference in employment now is to be determined, "as far as practicable, on the basis of relative needs," and where these are the same, is to be given first to needy war veterans, and then to other citizens. To "spread" benefits (without increasing appropriations), and to stimu-

late "career" workers to seek private jobs, the law requires that anyone, except a veteran, who has been on WPA rolls over eighteen months is to be removed. If certified after the expiration of thirty days still to be in need of relief, such person becomes eligible for, but is not automatically given, re-employment. About 650,000 people had been dismissed under this provision by September 1st.

Public projects which WPA may prosecute remain substantially the same as in the past. Federal expenditures on future non-federal building, but not other, projects are limited to \$52,000. Federal costs will not be affected greatly since non-labor expenditures are limited to seven dollars per man per month, while the quality of projects in communities in financial straits will probably be lowered. Congressmen thought "subversion" outweighed social utility, so the Federal Theatre Project was abolished outright, while the music, writing, art, and historical records projects are permitted only if sponsored by local governments, whose contributions need not be more than nominal, but which may lack legal authority or interest. Most of these projects, however, continue to operate, usually under sponsorship of state agencies.

Prevailing hourly rates of wages are terminated and, with some exceptions, a standard month of 130 hours is required of relief workers. Unions fear that private employers, too, will cut wages, and local officials are worried by costs of materials required by increased working time; but the WPA contends that efficiency will be increased and that off-time "chiseling" will be reduced. Finally, the 1940 relief law requires that monthly earnings "shall not be varied for workers of the same type in different geographical areas to any greater extent than may be justified by differences in the cost [not standard] of living." Northern wage scales have been retained, and in some cases reduced, while

southern earnings have been increased substantially.

ELIAS HUZAR

Cornell University

Greenbelt Experiences the Hatch Bill

Greenbelt, Maryland, the federal government's model village, is probably the first city in the country to feel immediate effects of the so-called Hatch bill "to prevent pernicious political activities." The city is the only one in Maryland having a manager form of government with a nonpartisan council. Almost 75 per cent of the town's 3,100 population are employees of the federal government. The great majority of these are under civil service regulation.

When President Roosevelt affixed his signature to the act on August 2nd, eighteen citizens of Greenbelt had officially or unofficially announced their intention to run for city council in the elections to be held the following month. Ten of the candidates were federal employees under regulation of the United States Civil Service Commission. At once excitement was great and discussion spirited as to whether or not these federal employees were disqualified from seeking office. Although the President's message explaining the Hatch bill answered many inquiries it left unsettled the peculiar situation in Greenbelt.

One incumbent councilman standing for re-election sought clarification on the matter from the executive officer of the Civil Service Commission, and from the civil liberties unit of the Department of Justice. He was informed that under the Hatch bill he could not seek re-election and that should he do so the Attorney General of the United States would be forced to prosecute. At a stroke the number of eligible candidates in the community was reduced to the eight who were members of the 25 per cent of the town not in the federal service. Incumbents are not forced to

resign, however, but may hold office until the end of their terms.

There is a real doubt in the community as to whether it was legislative intent to deprive federal employees from seeking a nonpartisan local office. A test case would be desirable, inasmuch as the character of representation on legislative bodies not only in Greenbelt but also in many other communities in Maryland and Virginia is vitally affected.

The only organized effort which has been made on behalf of government employees living in nearby Maryland and Virginia cities is that of the Prince Georges County Municipal Association. At a meeting on September 14th, the association adopted a resolution to be presented to Representative Lansdale Sasser asking for an amendment to the Hatch act to permit federal employees to run for county and municipal offices. The association also is seeking support for this action from civic organizations and from the twenty-three town councils in the county. The results of this movement will be eagerly awaited by the many communities where federal workers have made a significant contribution to responsible civic leadership.

HUGH A. BONE

University of Maryland

Council-Manager Plan News

On September 26th, Columbia, Tennessee, adopted the manager plan of government at the polls. Election of council under the new charter will take place on October 14th.

Considerable interest in the manager plan is being shown in Ohio. The Zanesville city council has voted to place upon the November ballot a proposed amendment establishing the manager plan of government. The council's action followed the filing of petitions signed by 5,268 voters, asking a vote on the question. Circleville expects to take an advisory vote on manager government in November.

On September 8th **Ashtabula, Ohio**, defeated another attempt to do away with the manager charter under which the city has been operating since 1915. The majority was larger than in the case of previous efforts to discard the plan. The vote was 3,247 to 2,110.

Allegan, Michigan, will vote on a manager charter on November 7th.

Los Gatos, California, is to vote on council-manager government October 23rd.

A manager charter was adopted by the **Jackson, Michigan**, charter revision commission on August 14th, at its forty-second meeting. The next step will be the submission of the charter to the Governor and the Auditor General for approval. After obtaining such approval it is to be given to the city commission and submitted to popular referendum at the general election of November 7th.

Silverton, Oregon, may vote on the inauguration of city manager government this fall.

Gardiner, Maine, defeated a proposed manager charter on September 11th by a vote of 933 to 655.

Tippecanoe (Tipp) City, Ohio, defeated a proposed manager charter on September 23rd.

Waterbury, Connecticut, defeated its proposed city manager — proportional representation charter on October 3rd by a vote of 14,726 to 10,513.

On the same day **Grand Forks, North Dakota**, also defeated a proposed manager charter. The plan actually received a majority of the votes cast but because such referenda must receive a four-sevenths majority, the new charter cannot go into effect.

Petitions asking a vote on the manager plan have been filed in **Newark, New Jersey**, by the Citizens' Union. The petitions contained over 25,000 signatures, 8,000 more than necessary.

The **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, Citizens' Council is urging the Charter Study Commission of that city to give full consideration to the manager plan of government.

Poughkeepsie, New York, will hold a referendum on the appointment of a char-

ter commission at the November election.

Honolulu, H. I., is among the cities actively interested in the manager plan.

Richmond Poll Favors Vote on One-Chamber Council

In Richmond, Virginia, the *Richmond News-Leader*, polling citizens on the question whether a single body of nine men should replace the present bicameral council of thirty-two, found three persons opposed to a referendum on the subject, as against 223 in favor of it.

Active League in Seattle

Citizens interested in good government for Seattle and King County have strengthened and developed the Seattle Municipal League during the past twelve months, although there is still some difficulty in getting the work adequately financed.

From more or less of a debating society exercising a mild influence the league is an increasingly effective instrument of municipal research and publicity, with a paid staff responsible to an elected board of directors. The executive secretary is Glenn Eastburn, who came to Seattle with an enviable record in connection with the improvement of local government over a period of years, first in Omaha and then throughout the state of Nebraska.

The league has established thirty-eight committees for the active participation of the league's members. Sixteen of these committees have to do with affairs of the city government, eleven are concerned with county matters, six deal with general problems of local government, while five committees concern themselves with league matters of internal character.

Mayor Langlie's program of rehabilitating the Seattle transportation system passed another hurdle on August 21st, when the City Council confirmed, eight to one, his three nominees for the Street Railway Commission.

The State Highway Department in Washington inaugurated a program of vehicle inspection for all automobiles throughout the state early this year. It has met with general satisfaction. Effective

August 1st, all automobile drivers' licenses are issued only after examination.

Minneapolis Civic Council Arranges One Hundred Meetings

The Civic Council of Minneapolis, Minnesota, which has an organization in all the wards of the city, according to *Civic Councilor*, its monthly publication, has made plans for upwards of one hundred public discussion meetings in the next eight months, in coöperation with other civic organizations, clubs, church groups, and community committees. A group of speakers, both men and women, have volunteered to lead the discussions. The council has accumulated much factual material upon a wide variety of subjects having to do with Minneapolis resources, industrial development, business prosperity, labor relations, unemployment, city government, civic responsibilities, and municipal recreational facilities. The discussions are intended to be entirely informative, and the list of topics will be expanded as necessary.

Municipal Cooperation Facilitated by New Legislation

New laws enabling local governments to coöperate in performing services stood out among those enacted by state legislatures in 1939, a survey in twenty-eight representative states by the American Municipal Association shows.

Other legislation of importance to cities gained them new revenue-producing and regulatory powers in some states, and in others increased state supervision of municipal administration, especially in finance.

The new laws enabling local governments to contract with one another or with state agencies for services cover matters ranging from airport building to fire and police protection. These laws are intended to make it possible for small units of government to get better facilities and services.

In Wisconsin cities, villages, towns, counties, and school districts are given

blanket authority to enter into agreements for the joint performance of any services. In Arkansas two or more cities may now build and operate airports jointly. A new Michigan law permits two or more governmental subdivisions to join in providing for public buildings or other public purposes.

Intercity contracts for fire protection, which will help solve the problems of small local governments, are made possible under new laws in Illinois, Iowa, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Nebraska, and Oregon. To further coöperation in police affairs, Kansas established a state bureau of investigation for promoting the exchange of information on criminals among local and state agencies. In addition, there are new laws to facilitate intergovernmental contracts on highway construction, personnel administration, pension plans, and other activities.

Local shares of taxes collected and funds administered by the state were increased in many states, among them Oklahoma, Utah, Kansas, Michigan, and North Carolina. In Kansas, counties will receive 30 per cent and cities 40 per cent of the cigarette tax. North Carolina increased the cities' and counties' share of the intangibles tax from 50 to 60 per cent. In other states revenue reallocations were from gasoline or motor vehicle taxes.

Among laws granting new general powers to cities were those in five states—Arizona, Idaho, Missouri, New Mexico, and Washington—permitting the creation of local housing authorities. Oregon by a new enactment allows cities to put money aside in sinking funds for construction of public improvements or purchase of equipment in the future. Partly in order to provide cities with more funds for law enforcement, Missouri and Oklahoma authorized them to levy license taxes on beer and liquor dispensaries.

State supervision of local government finance was increased in Alabama, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Iowa. The Minnesota act, the most inclusive, authorizes

the state public examiner to collect local financial data, prescribe local financial forms, and upon request to install finance systems.

Interstate Control of River Pollution

Interstate commissions are taking administrative measures toward the control of pollution in three important rivers—the Delaware, the Potomac, and the Ohio—while awaiting the enactment of formal legislative compacts, according to the Council of State Governments. The importance of these drainage basins in the event of emergency conditions brought by war makes it more urgent to speed the present projects for the improvement of conditions, according to the council.

The Delaware River in particular is an important artery for industrial shipping. Under present interstate regulations the state health departments of Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania are enforcing purity standards which would require industries to purify the wastes discharged from new facilities. Legislation to give continuing effect to the interstate agreement on the Delaware still awaits ratification by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, which may consider it in a special session later this year. The legislation was drafted by the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, which has headquarters in Philadelphia.

The Interstate Commission on the Potomac Basin will set up headquarters in Washington, D. C., in the near future, the council reported. A compact establishing purity standards for the prevention of pollution has been ratified by the Maryland legislature, and will get legislative attention in Virginia in 1940 and West Virginia in 1941. The Pennsylvania legislature, which refused to ratify it this year, may reconsider it in a special session.

Uniform legislation to create an Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission, and to set up minimum standards for the

treatment of sewage and waste, has been ratified by the legislatures of five of the nine states concerned—Illinois, Indiana, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. Since West Virginia made her ratification dependent on that of Pennsylvania, however, the compact will probably not go into effect until another state ratifies it. It will go before the Kentucky legislature in 1940.

Governmental Stimulation of Industry in Mississippi

The BAWI (balance agriculture with industry) program in Mississippi, born of a 1936 statute permitting public financing of new industries, after approval of an enterprise by the Mississippi Industrial Commission and of a bond issue by the electorate of a municipality, is credited with raising the value of the state's industrial production to exceed that of agriculture for the first time in 1938. Another industrial stimulus employed has been tax exemption. Chemurgic processes, such as that of making starch from sweet potatoes, developed as a federal emergency relief project in 1933 and taken over by a farm coöperative, have also increased production and employment.

Business Manager Appointed in Minnesota

Under the authority granted by the recent reorganization act in Minnesota, Governor Harold E. Stassen has appointed as commissioner of administration¹ 36-year-old Leslie Gravlin, who studied political economy at Hamline University and later worked with governmental research bureaus in St. Paul and Providence. In his new position he will have supervision, under the governor, of business and financial matters of the state, with broad powers corresponding largely to those of a business manager.

¹See NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW for July, page 495.

Citizenship Day in Illinois

Governor Henry Horner of Illinois has designated Sunday, October 15th, as "Citizenship Day" for 1939, under an act of the last legislature providing for the selection by the Governor of an October Sunday to "be observed throughout the state as a day for the holding of appropriate ceremonies for the preparation as citizens of persons who, during the period of twelve months prior thereto, have reached the age of twenty-one years." Widespread observance of the day is being encouraged by the Illinois Conference for the Celebration of Citizenship Day. The ceremonies held earlier in the year in New York City and in Wisconsin (particularly at Manitowoc) are pointed to as examples.

Arizona League Prints News

A printed magazine, *Arizona Municipalities*, has succeeded the mimeographed *Municipalities News* which has been the mouthpiece of the Arizona Municipal League since August 1937.

Correspondence Courses to Aid Administrators

The Institute for Training in Municipal Administration, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois, is now offering ten practical correspondence courses in the principal fields of municipal administration prepared especially for administrators on the job. The topics include the American city and its government, technique of municipal administration (beginning December 15th), and courses in the administration of municipal personnel, finance, public works, police, fire, planning, welfare, and recreation.

Merit System Applied to Social Security Administration

Just before adjournment on August 5th, Congress passed an amendment to the social security act that in effect will require states receiving moneys under the terms of the act to establish personnel

standards on a merit basis for employees administering unemployment compensation, old-age assistance, and other social security programs, according to the Civil Service Assembly *News Letter*.

As provided under the terms of the amendment, after January 1, 1940, the Social Security Board shall make no certification for payment to any state unless it finds that the social security legislation of such state includes a provision relating to the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards on a merit basis, provided, however, that the board exercise no authority with respect to the selection, tenure of office, and compensation of any individual employed in accordance with such methods.

New York County to Vote on Manager Plan

Tammany Fights County Reform

By PAUL W. WAGER

Onondaga County, New York, will vote on November 7th on a new charter prescribing the manager plan of government. The proposal also provides for the elimination of all elective officers except judges, six department heads to be appointed by the manager, and a county board of supervisors of ten members to be elected by proportional representation—five from the city of Syracuse and five from the country towns.

San Mateo County Seeks Charter Amendment

San Mateo County, California, is once again attempting to change its home rule charter.¹ In 1938, by popular vote, the county executive's position was made elective rather than appointive. A move is

¹See also "County Manager Government in California," by Robert C. Houston, NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, February 1939.

now under way to abolish that office entirely. On September 19th the Board of Supervisors instructed the district attorney to prepare an amendment to that effect, to be placed on the November 7th ballot. Outright repeal of the home rule charter is also being urged in some quarters.

These actions are the outgrowth of many months of disagreement between the county executive and the Board of Supervisors, culminating in a controversy over the appointment of a director of county health and welfare.

Suit to Fight Vote on County Reform

Tammany Hall and other Democratic organizations, reports the *New York Times*, are planning to sponsor a law suit to invalidate the petitions, promoted by Mayor La Guardia and a group of his supporters, that would place on the ballot this fall a referendum on the consolidation of county offices and county jobs.

Under the city charter changes in the structural form of the city government can be proposed by any group of voters, even if they fail to get the approval of the city council, provided their petitions, filed with the city clerk, total 50,000 names.

The petition is the first attempt that has been made to change the new city charter by popular referendum.

New York Town Loses its Capital

Dispossessed from Peekskill, where it has made its headquarters since 1788, the historic town of Cortlandt is seeking a new place within its corporate boundaries to establish town offices. The ouster results from the decision of Peekskill to secede January 1st from Cortlandt and become the fifth city in Westchester County, New York.

Although Peekskill has been the township's largest community in population, its secession will make only a nick on the township's northwestern edge. Cortlandt is about eleven miles long and five miles wide, and there is keen competition among the remaining communities to attract the town offices.

Heretofore Cortlandt township has had only one representative on the county board; now Peekskill will itself elect two supervisors and the residual township will continue to elect one.

New York County Will Sell Five Thousand Properties

Nassau County planned to put more than five thousand parcels of real estate on the auction block during the three weeks beginning September 23rd. They represent properties taken under foreclosure proceedings for tax delinquency, and they include single-family dwellings, apartment houses, and stores, as well as vacant lots, in practically every city and village in the county. It is stated that a clear title can be offered to each purchaser in the form of a warranty deed upon which various title companies stand ready to issue policies of title guarantee, the county itself having acquired a good deed. The declared policy of the county is to let a parcel go just about as soon as the upset price, represented by the taxes due, is reached. As little as 20 or 30 per cent down payment is accepted though a 5 per cent discount is offered for a cash payment.

The wisdom of dumping so many parcels on the market at one time might well be questioned and also the wisdom of selling the properties too far below their true value. Apparently the fear of being criticized for profiting from tax delinquency has caused the county to overlook the depressing effect which the sale of several thousand parcels at bargain prices will have on the rental value of the non-delinquent properties.

A State Department of Justice in North Carolina

July 1, 1939, witnessed the establishment in North Carolina of the State Department of Justice authorized and provided for by the last General Assembly. An amendment to the state constitution, approved in November 1938, removed any potential constitutional obstacles in the way of such a department.

The Department of Justice is under the supervision and direction of the Attorney General. Provision is made for three divisions. A division of criminal and civil statistics is to collect and correlate information in respect to criminal law administration and the operations of all agencies and institutions charged with the supervision of offenders on probation, in penal and correctional institutions, and on parole. This division is also to collect information on the operations of the various civil courts and quasi-judicial tribunals. It is instructed to make scientific study, analysis, and comparison of the information so collected with similar information gathered by federal agencies.

A second division, designated as the division of legislative drafting and codification of statutes, is to prepare bills to be presented to the General Assembly and to supervise the recodification of all of the statute law of the state and then to keep such code up to date.

The third division, to be known as the bureau of investigation, is to supplant and continue the work begun by a bureau of investigation and identification set up in 1937. It is primarily to aid the local police in apprehending criminals, and bringing them to justice, though it may also aid in prosecution.

The State Department of Justice, for which North Carolina is erecting a fine new building, represents another centralizing tendency, though one that can hardly be avoided if there is to be adequate crime control.

War Economy Complicates Local Finance

"Ham and Eggs" Again on California Ballot

By WADE S. SMITH

Although there is every indication of almost unanimous determination to keep

the United States apart from the European war which began on September 3rd, certain aspects of the situation abroad, as they may affect the finances of local government here, merit attention. Conflict on a large scale and of long duration, which now seems likely, must inevitably dislocate to greater or less extent all economic activities in the neutral nations, and we are already feeling it in this country.

Most sensitive to war conditions, of course, and hence first in affecting local finances, is the disruption of the money market. Although the gyrations of the stock market were mild in comparison with those experienced in 1914, a boom in "war babies" was under way even prior to the time war was formally declared, and interest rates rose sharply. For state and municipal units this meant an immediate decline in bond prices, with a consequent higher net interest cost on new bond issues sold after the break. *The Bond Buyer's* index of municipal bond yields, computed for long term obligations of the nation's twenty largest cities, rose from 2.67 per cent at August 1st to 3.21 per cent at September 1st, with the market at the latter date sluggish and a reported wide spread between bid and asked prices. The twenty-bond average was off 55 basis points from the year's high, or about where it stood prior to the advent of abnormally low interest rates in 1936.

Cities which came into the market with new bond offerings after war was declared suffered sharply in comparison with prices which they had been securing previously. The state of Mississippi on August 31st rejected a bid with a net interest cost of 3.62 per cent on \$5,000,000 highway bonds, reoffering them with a consequent best bid of 4 per cent for \$2,000,000 and an option on the balance as 4s and 3¾s. Providence, which a year ago was selling its bonds as 1¾s, and a few months ago as 2s, could get only 3 per cent for a ten and one-half year average maturity offering. Numerous cities and other local units announced that no bids had been received

on offerings made after September 1st, while a large number of sales were postponed or bids rejected.

Basically, of course, some increase in interest rates to municipalities has been indicated for some time. That the cost of municipal borrowing will immediately reach the *Bond Buyer's* high of 5.69 per cent of May 1, 1933, is most unlikely, however. Excess bank reserves remain large, substantial competition for high grade municipals still exists among fiduciary and trust agencies, where safety rather than yield is the primary consideration, and there is not as yet sufficient demand for capital from business and industrial concerns to push municipals to one side.

Since municipalities have borrowed at a lesser rate this year than last, when much borrowing was done in anticipation of 1938 federal works program needs, dealers have "kept their shelves clean," and the supply has managed generally to keep behind demand. Hence, the prospect at present is for further moderate increases in interest costs to local governments, but without any appreciable drying up of cash reservoirs eager to take municipal obligations.

Should the United States become involved in the war, or should there begin large-scale industrial expansion to supply either munitions or other commodities to the belligerents, it is quite possible that the local governments may find themselves squeezed when they go into the money market. In this case, the reappearance of 5, 6, and 7 per cent interest coupons on even fairly high grade municipal bonds is not an impossibility. The extent to which interest costs rise, however, would obviously depend on the extent to which industrial requirements ate into the cash and investors' reserves, and the more serious situation could be anticipated in the event the federal government declared war and began to borrow for large-scale war needs. In the latter eventuality, however,

municipal capital programs would undoubtedly be temporarily stopped, and only a minimum of municipal borrowing would be done. In the post-war era, considerably higher interest rates are to be anticipated, whatever the action of our own country, so it seems safe to assume that local budgets are going to include increasing interest costs for whatever local borrowing is done over the next three, five, or ten years.

As serious in its effects on local budgets, although not yet demonstrable with comparative figures, is an anticipated increase in the general price level, which will mean that the local governments in company with plain John Citizen will have to pay more for the commodities they buy. Such increases as are experienced during the balance of the current year are not likely to be important in unbalancing budgets, but small increases for 1940 budgets are quite likely if budget officers plan prudently for prospective requirements.

On the other side of the ledger, of course, is a prospective lessened expense which will result to the extent that those now on relief rolls are drawn back into private employment in case a "war boom" of any proportions develops. Such reduction, however, is apt to prove less important than many anticipate, since it is generally acknowledged that a fairly high percentage of the direct relief rolls represents unemployables, while such welfare items as old-age pensions, aid to dependent children and the blind, etc., would be affected not at all or would require increases to offset the rising cost of living which is inevitable if a real "war boom" develops.

A further possible cost to municipalities, but one which is not likely to be experienced on any wide scale, is that of installing facilities actually made necessary because of federal war-time activity. Many of our larger cities are still paying off bonds for various public works constructed during the last World War at the behest of the federal government (Tacoma's belt-

line street railway to service the dock area, which has lost money ever since, is a case in point), while not a few counties and cities have in the last year or two issued bonds or utilized current funds to provide sites for army air bases, training schools, and the like, demand for which will be accelerated if we are placed upon a war economy.

All apart from direct repercussions on municipal finance, the European war is not unlikely to present administrative problems which will be accompanied by financial demands. Already several of our larger cities, including New York City, have placed their police forces on a modified emergency basis to provide protection to foreign consulates, police public gatherings, and investigate "espionage."

Everything considered, and even if the United States happily manages to keep its skirts free from actual entanglement abroad, local governments are likely to be faced with increased costs and unusual service demands during the next few years as a result of the war. The situation may even present a rather searching test of the ingenuity of fiscal officers and other local administrators.

"Thirty-Thursday" Back in California

The "Thirty Dollars Every Thursday" scrip pension plan, which was narrowly defeated by California voters in the fall of 1938, is back again on the ballot for November 7, 1939, in refurbished and enlarged garb. The 1939 version contains all the salient points of the 1938 plan, and in addition proposes a state bank to handle scrip transactions, which bank shall be the "sole depository" of the state and its municipal subdivisions.

Renewed agitation for enactment of the constitutional amendment, establishing a thirty-dollar weekly scrip pension for unemployed and retired citizens over fifty years of age, was accompanied by an immediate drop in prices on California

and municipal bonds in the state, and in recent weeks local units there have been successively rebuffed in their efforts to raise money. In August the state sold an issue of short-term warrants totaling nearly \$3,000,000 at 4¾ per cent interest with an infinitesimal premium. Offerings since then have resulted in no bids. Los Angeles attempted on September 20th to dispose of \$3,000,000 water and power department general obligation bonds, and drew a blank with no bids offered. Similar experience has been shown by lesser units in recent weeks, although the situation is perhaps complicated to some extent by the fact that the bond market has been otherwise disrupted as noted in the preceding paragraphs.

Civic and business organizations throughout the state are fighting the proposal bitterly, and are being joined by organized labor, which last year supported the plan in return for pension advocates' support of labor legislation. The outcome, however, is expected to be close.

Forthcoming P.R. Elections

New York to Choose Second P.R. Council

***Five Other P.R. Contests
Five Votes on Adoption***

By GEORGE H. HALLETT, JR.

The second use of proportional representation in New York City is scheduled for November 7th under conditions differing greatly from those of its first use two years ago. Instead of being subordinated to an exciting mayoralty contest, with a large number of other important contests taking place at the same time, this year's council race will hold the center of the stage. Several judicial posts are to be filled also, Brooklyn elects a district attorney, sheriff, and register, and Staten

Island a sheriff, and there are referenda on *pari-mutuel* betting and county government reorganization; but this adds up to very little in the way of distraction as New York elections go. The vote will be lighter, but it should be possible to get more attention for the new method of election and its possibilities. Civic leaders are therefore hoping that the encouraging start made last time can be improved upon in the second council.

The number to be elected will not be known until the vote is in, for under the special New York plan of automatic proportional apportionment each borough elects as many councilmen each time as it polls multiples of 75,000 valid ballots, with an additional councilman for a remainder of 50,000. The present council consists of twenty-six members. The new council, since it is being elected in an off-year, is not expected to be much in excess of twenty.

The Citizens' Non-Partisan Committee, headed two years ago by Samuel Seabury and this year by Thomas D. Thacher, who was chairman of the charter commission which presented the new charter and P.R. to the voters in 1936, is presenting a fusion good government ticket again. The committee and its candidates are in general sympathy with the present non-partisan city administration. The ticket is shorter this time, consisting of six of the ten councilmen elected from the same ticket two years ago and fourteen others, divided among the five boroughs which form the P.R. districts. The ticket includes a considerable number, but not all, of the candidates of the Republican, American Labor, and City Fusion parties and several independent Democrats. All of the candidates will have the committee's designation after their names on the ballot this year, as they did not two years ago, so that it will be easier for voters to support the entire ticket if they wish to do so.

The Democratic organization, which or-

ganized the present council after a battle on the strength of just half the council's membership, is putting forward a non-overlapping ticket in every borough. The composition of the organization has been modified since the last election through the capture of its control in Queens by the insurgent group which elected two of the opposition councilmen, now included on the regular ticket.

The last date for filing nominating petitions is October 10th. Indications are that there will be many fewer aspirants than at the first election, when the Brooklyn list reached the surprising total of ninety-nine. This will make it correspondingly easier to center attention on the real contenders.

The P.R. counters are to be paid by the job instead of by the day, which is expected to reduce the time and expense of the count considerably.

A Joint Civic Committee on the Council Election, successor to the P.R. Joint Committee, has been formed with Mrs. Leopold K. Simon as chairman "to encourage registration and intelligent use of P.R." The committee represents most of the leading civic organizations of the city. It is circulating popular illustrated leaflets, sending out P.R. speakers, and carrying on other activities to emphasize the importance of this election and improve the popular understanding of the P.R. method and its opportunities.

First P.R. Campaign in Yonkers

While New York is preparing for its second P.R. election, the city of Yonkers, its next-door neighbor on the north, is preparing for its first. The Yonkers and New York P.R. rules are almost identical except that Yonkers elects at large, has no party or other designations on the P.R. ballots, and uses a fixed quota of 10,000 instead of 75,000. A council of five is expected. A special rule to keep the number uneven and thus avoid deadlocks calls for five members if the total valid vote is

between 40,000 and 60,000 and seven if the vote is between 60,000 and 80,000, which is barely possible.

There are three tickets in the field. The Republicans and Democrats have each nominated four. The City Manager League, which sponsored the present P.R.—manager charter, has taken its cue from the corresponding groups in Cincinnati, Toledo, and Hamilton and put forward an entirely separate non-political ticket of six. There are also several unattached independents.

Cincinnati's Eighth P.R. Council Campaign

Cincinnati's eighth proportional representation election will be held November 7th when the voters of the nation's second largest "P.R. city" elect nine councilmen to direct municipal affairs in 1940 and 1941.

Nominating petitions for twenty-nine candidates had been accepted by the Board of Elections when time for filing expired September 7th. Included were the two major tickets of nine each, representing respectively the City Charter Committee, the city management-P.R. group made up of independent Republicans and Democrats, and their traditional enemies, the local Republican Organization. Eleven independents also filed, among them being Herbert S. Bigelow, who announced his candidacy just before expiration of filing time. In 1935 Bigelow ran for council and was elected through support of the sky-rocketing Coughlin movement. He is expected this time to link his campaign with an appeal for an increase in the state's old-age pension grants.

Charter forces, jubilant after their successful defense of P.R. in the second raid thereon by anti-charter politicians last June, are forming a strong campaign committee under the chairmanship of Harry Drackett, nationally known manufacturer on whom has fallen the mantle of leadership from the late Henry Bentley. Ex-

Congressman Captain Victor E. Heintz and former Mayor Murray Seasongood have also come forward to lend assistance. Only missing veteran of the organization is Mrs. Mark G. Feder, research division chairman, who was a voyager on the ill-fated *Athenia*, and with other survivors was marooned on the Scottish coast.

Special headquarters have been opened on the top (forty-fifth) floor of Cincinnati's Carew Tower, where daily meetings of the leaders of the volunteer units, the men's and women's divisions and the speakers bureau, have been scheduled for the duration of the campaign.

Newspaper observers in the early stages of the campaign have given the Charter ticket an edge on chances of election of a majority on November 7th. Thus far, sole argument produced against the Charter record has been an appeal to the independent Republicans who have constituted an important segment of the Charter organization and Charter vote. This appeal is based on Cincinnati's traditional Republicanism in national affairs and a warning that "a vote against the Republican council ticket is a vote against the Republican national ticket in 1940."

This, Charter leaders are pointing out, is identical with the tactics of machine-controlled organizations in other cities, and a complete exposé of the fallacy has been prepared. Meanwhile the Charter candidates are promoting the facts concerning the Charter Committee's fourteen-year fight to improve Cincinnati governmental conditions, and are basing their confidence on this record and continuing enthusiasm of their volunteer workers' organization.

FOREST FRANK

Cincinnati City Charter Committee

A New Charter League in Hamilton

In preparation for the seventh P.R. election in Hamilton, Ohio, twenty-five miles north of Cincinnati, the old "charter commission" group has been enlarged and reorganized under the name of the Charter

League of Hamilton. Until the last election the charter commission which presented the P.R.—manager charter to the voters in 1926 and its successors had elected a high grade majority of from four to six out of seven councilmen at every election. In 1937 the leaders of this group decided to make the elimination of gambling the chief issue. Several of their councilmen differed and were omitted from the ticket. Thereupon the Democratic organization nominated them and they were elected anyway. Nominally the charter group got only two out of seven, but the entire council elected consisted of former charter councilmen and the city's phenomenal good government regime continued unabated. The reorganized Charter League, which includes the former charter leaders, is sponsoring a ticket closely resembling the successful charter tickets of former years. Its chairman is W. P. Watson, a prominent business man; its vice-chairman Miss Ella Mae Cope, a member of the original charter commission.

Toledo City Manager League in the Field Again

Toledo, Ohio, is about to hold its third P.R. election and the City Manager League, which elected a majority of the members of the city council at each of the previous elections, has launched its third council campaign.

The league, an outgrowth of the charter commission which was instrumental in establishing council-manager government in Toledo in 1935, on September 11th announced its endorsement of nine candidates for the nine seats to be filled.

The league's ticket this year is representative of all sections of the city and all groups of citizens. Business and labor are represented, as well as the legal and engineering professions.

Before the league announced its endorsements, a meeting of the nine candidates and the league's executive committee was held, at which the nine pledged themselves

to abide by all the principles of good government and stated that they would be staunch advocates of improved municipal administration under the city manager—small council charter.

Present at this meeting, at the league's invitation, was Dr. A. R. Hatton, authority on city manager government, who explained to the prospective councilmen methods and practices which should be followed to obtain the best results from city manager government.

Immediately following public announcement of the slate, the league launched an intensive campaign for election of its candidates, which it plans to pursue up to election day on November 7th. A director of organization is on the job, a downtown headquarters is open, and a large staff of workers, both in headquarters and in the field, is being assembled.

There are forty-two candidates qualified in the race for council. The league endorsed only two of the seven incumbent councilmen who are seeking re-election. There is feeling among some citizens that this was a dangerous tactic, since some of those who are not endorsed are conceded an excellent chance of re-election. After a careful survey of individual records, however, the league decided to stand or fall on the principle of good government and not to yield to arguments of political expediency.

RICHARD P. OVERMYER

Toledo City Manager League

Boulder's Twelfth Use of P.R.

The little university city of Boulder, Colorado, which has used P.R. longer than any other city in this country, is about to hold its twelfth P.R. election. It has elected three members of its council of nine by P.R. at large every second year since the method was first adopted, with the city manager plan, in 1917.

Five Votes on Adoption

Four votes on questions involving the

adoption of P.R. are now definitely scheduled for this fall in the state of New York.

The city councils of New Rochelle, White Plains, and Schenectady all voted to put the proposed P.R. charter amendments on the general election ballots in response to the 10 per cent petitions filed in their respective cities without waiting for the supplementary 5 per cent petitions which would have forced the proposals to a vote under New York's city home rule law. In each of these cities P.R. is being opposed by the dominant Republican organization, and supported by the independent and Democratic minorities with what is considered a good chance of success.

As reported in our last issue there is to be a vote also in Onondaga County, New York, where a P.R.—county manager proposal has been brought forward by the Democratic minority and is gaining independent support.

Word comes as we go to press that Waterbury, Connecticut, voting on October 3rd, defeated its proposed P. R.—manager charter.

A TAFT IN CITY HALL

(Continued from Page 697)

terested in people, and about the only thing that riles him is the indifference that means cruelty to people in trouble.

He will go about his re-election like a practical politician, not a philanthropist. "I've got an office with two girls working all the time," he says. (The election will be held in November.³) "I clear with the City Charter Committee, of course, and all the charter candidates run on the same platform, but I run my own campaign. I'd have some contacts, you see, that wouldn't be available to the

rest of the candidates."

Contacts? Bankers? Millionaires? Industrialists? Well, he knows them and most of them like him personally. But that wasn't what he meant.

"For instance, I represent locally the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Sidney Hillman's union, a CIO affiliate," he continues casually. "I led the fight for the housing ordinance last November, and so I have a good many building trades friends. I'm active in church work, a member of the organizing committee of the new World Council of Churches, and I have many friends in the YMCA and the Community Chest."

He writes all his own speeches and publicity handouts. "I know the newspaper people myself, and I know what they want. A friend of mine who runs the *American Israelite* has volunteered to help on the publicity."

He does not think Cincinnati government is perfect. Yet he is firmly convinced that Cincinnati has good government and that it has honest government. The reason he is interested in being a member of the council is to help give the city even better government. He is not looking for an immediate millenium. Of the (local) Republican party's attempt last spring to have P. R. abolished he said, "We've licked them now. They'd be foolish to try again. In the near future, I mean. Nobody can tell what will happen in a few years!" He shook his head. It is obvious that in the lexicon of Charles P. Taft eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and he will never question his own duty to stay up all night watching.

³See also "Cincinnati's Eighth P. R. Election," p. 746.

Books in Review

EDITED BY ELSIE S. PARKER

Local Government Debt Administration. By Carl H. Chatters and Albert M. Hillhouse. New York City, Prentice Hall Inc., 1939. xii, 528 pp. \$5.00.

This is a thoroughly practical book on a very important phase of municipal administration. Studied and applied by municipal officials it will help to reduce the cost of borrowing for their governments and may well serve as a means of avoiding financial embarrassment. It should prove equally useful to municipal bond dealers, bond attorneys, and investors in municipal bonds, particularly because of the forthright way in which it identifies their interests with sound debt administration. Students of public finance and of local government will find in this volume an authoritative and genuinely valuable addition to their fields of interest.

The experience of recent years has produced very substantial evidence, not only that safe standards and practices for public borrowing have been inadequately diffused and followed but that some standards still remained to be formulated. The authors have proceeded from a frank recognition of this state of affairs. They devote little space to abstract theory but base their treatise directly on the problems which the years of the depression disclosed.

Among the best features of the book—and they make it an indispensable handbook for municipal finance officers—are the specific and detailed rules and suggestions for the sale of bonds and the insuring of prompt payment. These begin with choosing the best time to sell bonds and range through such items as the essential steps prior to the sale, preparing the market with appropriate publicity, actual conduct of the sale and delivery of the bonds, to the types of bond records which should be kept, the proper handling of bond revenues, and the administration of

sinking funds. Fifty figures and tables serve particularly to illustrate and clarify these procedures.

The broader aspects of debt administration receive equally thorough and realistic treatment. The long neglected but important factor of debt structure is given new significance. Chapters are devoted to the control of short-term borrowing, the judicious limits for special assessment bond financing, the financing of municipally owned utilities, and standards for public reporting. The discussion of debt management in financial crises, drawn directly from recent painful experience, prescribes remedies which belong in the permanent reserves for ready reference. A final chapter on the formulation of a debt policy is a commonsense dissertation on safe standards and foresighted planning which not only finance officers but all progressive municipal officials and students of government will appreciate.

FREDERICK L. BIRD

America in Midpassage. By Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard. New York City, The Macmillan Company, 1939. 977 pp. \$3.50.

Who's Who credits Charles A. Beard with only sixty-five years, yet he was introduced at a recent dinner as the "beloved philosopher of the Connecticut hills," and the dinner guests rose to their feet and applauded with an enthusiasm that shook the cutlery.

There is no "reviewing" the works of Charles and Mary Beard, almost in the same way as there is no "reviewing" the works of William Shakespeare. Beard has the advantage over Shakespeare of being alive, and of being invested with the warm glamor of a life starred by a colorful incident in the defense of academic freedom and by the advocacy and sponsorship of

reforms and ideas dear to the forward-thinking persons of today.

Certainly Beard has never written "unbiased" history, and *America in Mid-passage*, being of a period within the memory of almost every present reader, may appear to be less unbiased than any of the former Beard works. But if the reader's prejudices are the same as the prejudices of Beard—and it is hard for those who were intellectually weaned on Beard works to escape that identity—the most one can say in the way of a review is that "I suppose all this is colored by his own decided notions but I don't mind it because I agree with him."

The Beard style has not changed in this newest work, which deals with America from 1929 to the present. The lusty, ever-present cultivated sense of humor, the gift of generalization without vagueness and of detail without repletion, are still there, as they were in the first two volumes of *The Rise of American Civilization*. (This one, of course, is the third.)

As for the point of view, it is still strongly tinged with the economic interpretation of politics; it is by and large pro-Roosevelt; and it retains its love for the people of this country.

Perhaps the first two volumes of *The Rise of American Civilization* were better than this one. Nine hundred seventy-seven pages may be too much for a scant ten years. The perspective blurs a little, perhaps because the reader is too close to the period. Nevertheless, *America in Mid-passage* is one of the Beard works. Like Spode or Rembrandt or Shakespeare, there is no gainsaying it.

M. R.

State Aid and School Costs. By Alonzo G. Grace and G. A. Moe. New York City, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1939. xv, 400 pp. \$3.50.

This volume is in two parts, the first dealing with state aid and the second with

school costs. Part I gives an excellent history of school financing in New York State, followed by a detailed account of the present administrative organization of the system and the methods of apportioning state aid. Criticism is directed, not so much at the distribution formulas, as at the local administrative organization through which state aid operates.

Part II presents much factual material, showing a wide range of costs from district to district not all of which is justified by differences in educational achievement. In fact, the evidence shows that important savings could be made without any reduction in educational standards. Some savings, such as a state system of insurance, would be possible under the present setup. Most of the savings indicated, however, could be achieved only through redistricting.

Redistricting is the fundamental thesis of the book—the first requisite for economy and for improved state aid. It is suggested that the more than eight thousand districts now in existence be reduced to approximately five hundred.

The redistricting accomplished, it is proposed to revise the entire system of state aid. The equalization principle would be retained, but the present aids would be replaced by a single standard. The amount of state aid for each district would be the difference between the "cost of the maximum approvable program" multiplied by the "number of weighted pupils in the district" and the yield of a 5-mill tax on equalized valuation. The cost of the maximum approvable program takes into account "the (1) nature and extent of the curriculum, (2) teacher load, (3) salaries, (4) special services . . . , (5) number of periods per week and length of periods, (6) equipment and supplies, (7) library facilities, (8) plant program, and such other factors as may influence the total school program" (page 253). This "means that New York State will base equalization of educational opportunity . . . upon

a program of education rather than upon a sum of money." Pupils in the district are defined as "pupils belonging from the kindergarten through the twelfth grade, . . . rather than pupils in average daily attendance or registered. Weighting should be in terms of age group rather than in terms of educational level" (pages 253-54).

This is a marked departure from accustomed paths. Where does it lead? The reviewer has become lost in a fog. Is the first factor described uniform for all districts, or does it vary from one district to another? And in the end can it be anything but a sum of money, even though it be a variable sum? What is meant by "pupils belonging"?

The reviewer is also puzzled by the retention of the 5-mill requirement in the compromise reforms, recommended in the absence of reorganization (page 234), in view of the apparent condemnation of this requirement as "fundamentally antagonistic to the principle of equalization" (page 163) and the seeming approval of a 3-mill substitute (page 169). One final criticism. Some of the graphs (especially chart 9, page 322), violating commonly accepted graphic practice as they do, tend to confuse rather than clarify; and the occasional misspelling of authors' names in the footnotes and index (e.g., pp. 114, 218, 393, 394, 396), will mislead the student who wishes to investigate the problem further.

These shortcomings should not be stressed unduly. It should rather be emphasized that the study is well organized and sound in its general conclusions. It is just because it is probably destined to influence the state educational system for the better that the reviewer regrets that a little more care was not taken in the final presentation to make it consistent and clear beyond misunderstanding.

MABEL NEWCOMER

Vassar College

The Book of the States 1939-40 (vol. III). Chicago, The Council of State Governments, 1939. xix, 454 pp. \$3.50.

An invaluable companion volume to the similarly invaluable *Municipal Yearbook* is *The Book of the States* for 1939-40. This is the best of the three editions, the most packed with the kind of facts which are tedious to compile and priceless to have. Dr. Bane, executive director of the Council of State Governments, says in his foreword: "The purpose of *The Book of the States* is twofold: first, to provide an authoritative source of information on a wide range of state activities; and, second, to report the activities of the Council of State Governments and of the various conferences held under its auspices."

To allow for an expansion of the reference material, the minutes of the conferences have been condensed in this edition. Among the many new features are discussions of present status, recent advance, and trends in fields of importance such as (to name only a few) social security, labor, public welfare, savings bank life insurance. *The Book of the States* has taken a far more substantive turn in this new edition. The lists and enumerations are still there, but there is also comprehensive material of an encyclopedic nature.

M. R.

Additional Books and Reports Received¹

Civil Service

Civil Service Law. Oliver P. Field. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1939. ix, 286 pp. \$5.00.

Federal Government

Our Federal Government and How It Functions. By Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration.

¹See also "Research Reports Received," page 731.

New York City, Hastings House, 1939. x, 234 pp. \$1.75.

Housing

Design of Low-Rent Housing Projects. Planning the Site. By United States Housing Authority. Washington, D. C., Superintendent of Documents, 1939. 84 pp. Sixty cents.

Municipal Government

Municipal Legislation of 1939. A Review of State Legislation of Interest to Municipalities. Chicago, The American Municipal Association, 1939. 35 pp. Mimeo. One dollar.

Municipal Self-Government in Britain. A Study of the Practice of Local Government in ten of the larger British cities. By George Montagu Harris. London, P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1939. x, 342 pp. 15s.

Planning

From the Ground Up. By New England Regional Planning Commission. Boston, National Resources Committee, Regional Office, 1939. 54 pp.

Purchasing

Purchasing for Small Cities. By Russell Forbes and members of the staff of Public Administration Service. Chicago, Public Administration Service, 1939. 22 pp. Fifty cents.

Taxation and Finance

Accounting for Public Property. By Municipal Finance Officers' Association. Chicago, 1939. 48 pp. Fifty cents.

Analysis of Taxable Corporation Income Tax Returns Filed in 1937 and 1938 on Previous Years' Incomes. By Division of Research and Statistics. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Tax Commission, 1939. v, 69 pp. mimeo. Charts.

An Analysis of Delinquent Taxes in Relation to Valuation. Classification of Delinquent Properties and the Effect of the Whittemore Act to Delinquent Taxes for Lucas County, Ohio. By Hale T. Shenefield, Auditor of Lucas County, Ohio. 248 pp. mimeo. (Apply author, Toledo, Ohio.)

Consumer Taxes. By Tax Policy League. New York City, 1939. 18 pp. mimeo. Twenty-five cents.

County, City and Town Government in Tennessee, 1938 Per Capita Statements, the Taxpayers Report Upon the Third Annual State-wide Survey of. Nashville, Tennessee Taxpayers Association, 1939. 100 pp.

County of Erie, New York. Financial Statement, Statistical Data and Essential Facts. By Charles Ulrich, County Treasurer. Buffalo, New York, 1939. 39 pp.

Digest of State Laws Relating to Net Income Taxes 1938. Compiled by Robert H. Holley, under supervision of C. E. Rightor. Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1938. iv, 133 pp. Twenty cents.

Enforcement of Real Estate Tax Liens and Constitutional Barriers to Remedial Legislation for Tax Delinquents in Each of the United States. By Louis F. Alyea. Chicago, Municipal Finance Officers' Association, 1939. Charts. Thirty-five cents.

Financial Statistics of Local Governments in Oklahoma for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1938 (with comparisons to Previous Years). By Division of Research and Statistics, Oklahoma City Oklahoma Tax Commission, 1939. vii, 150 pp.

Local Taxation and Housing. Majority Report of Taxation Committee of the Citizens' Housing Council of New York, New York City, Tax Policy League 1939. 72 pp. mimeo. Fifty cents.